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THE CHRISTLIKE GOD

A SURVEY OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES
FROM THE CHRISTIAN POINT
OF VIEW

BY

FRANCIS JOHN McCONNELL

One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church

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NOTE

We can sometimes get the point of view of an author more quickly if we know what he is *not* trying to do. In this book I am not trying to prove anything. I am not seeking to prove the existence of God, or the primacy of the ethical attributes in the character of God, or the Christlikeness of God. Assuming such Christlikeness, I am simply trying to see whither it will lead us in our thought of God. I seek to follow out implications and not to adduce proofs.

Francis J. McConnell.

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTLIKE GOD

Introductory

For a good many years I have been holding interviews with young people about the problems of religious experience and theory. Very often I am asked by these younger persons—and by older ones too, for that matter—why the church, and particularly the theologians, insist so stubbornly upon such features as the miraculous in the story of Jesus. The questioners say that there is so much in the life of Jesus that we can accept without taking miracle also! The wisdom and strength and beauty of the words and life and sacrifice of Jesus set before us an admittedly ideal character. Why not take Jesus just as the one complete life and try to make that life our own?

This question is being urged to-day with such sincerity that we must face it, and face it sympathetically. It does not grow out of a mood of doubt. It may not be the voice of skepticism at all, but of belief—belief in the possibilities of human nature, belief in the

laws in the midst of which we live, belief in the imitability of a perfect character. There is indeed a measure of justice in an impatience against dogmatists who will have it that if we cannot have a miraculous Christ we cannot have any Christ, in face of the fact that the picture of the Christ is actually before us, and that multitudes do take him as the perfect ideal without reference to the miraculous. Some of the defenders of the miraculous to-day speak so mechanically as to create a much less vital spiritual impression than do many of those who reject miracle outright.

I wish it understood that I am not now concerned with the miraculous as such but, rather, with the question raised as to why believers in Christ hold fast to miracle in their interpretation of him. The answer is, of course, that they hold to miracle as a witness to divinity, and the answer makes it clear that there is a sound aim back of much of the emphasis on miracle. The craving for marvel as such—for sign and wonder—has no more spiritual value to-day than when Jesus called the craving the mark of an evil and adulterous generation. All through the history of religion the true priests of God have had to fight against this hankering for some-

thing which is often but little better than magic. Still, if we look at the defense of miracle at least implied in the great creedal statements of the church, the intent of the defense is entirely clear, namely, to connect Christ so closely with God that men can believe in a Christlike God. The methods by which thinkers have sought to establish this connection have often been faulty enough, because the general world view of the thinkers has often been at fault. For example, men have at times believed that God once for all created the world and then set it to go on by itself. The only way he could get into it thereafter was thought of as through miracle. Hence, whatever seemed natural about the life of Jesus was by its naturalness shut off from the divine. The defenders of miracle were under a system of philosophy which almost forced them to rely upon miracle as the only intelligible path through which God could reach men, inadequate as that path is to us of a later day. By whatever means, miraculous or otherwise, as have seemed adequate at the moment, the church has always aimed to keep the connection of Christ and God the closest possible. There has been no term of intimacy closer than that of Son, and the church has always insisted upon calling Jesus the Son

of God. It is the insistence that must be kept in mind. If the form of philosophy of a period has lent itself readily to making Jesus divine, that philosophy has been freely utilized, as witness the use by the church of the Logos notion.

If the philosophy has not lent itself to the exaltation of Christ, the church has affirmed his exaltation nevertheless, as in the deistic period noted above, in which period, with natural processes represented as going on of themselves, theology found the proof of Christ's divinity in his miraculously breaking through the natural processes. The attempt is always to carry Christ as close to God as possible. If we think of God as triune, the Son is the second Person of the Trinity. Some ardent teachers would almost make him the first Person, as did a celebrated Methodist theologian who once spoke of Jesus as God Almighty. The church has usually, however, condemned such extreme putting of Christ's divinity as heresy, insisting that this claim for Jesus would empty the word "Son" of its essential force.

It is this insistence upon divinity that puzzles so many of the younger students of the life of Christ. Why cannot we take that life, just as far as we can interpret it into

terms that we can understand, as a statement of the human ideal? Some students can hardly restrain their resentment at the tendency to deify Jesus, since that tendency seems to them to rob him of his supreme value as a human ideal. To such students the tendency to make man into God seems not much better than other attempts of the kind which were characteristic even of the heathenism into which Christianity came. Critics point out to us that in the early days of the church it was quite common even for popular thought to deify a man. On that memorable occasion in Paul's missionary journey through South Galatia when the multitudes called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Mercury, they were acting true to that idea of their time which conceived of gods as capable of appearing in human form, and which found it easy to believe that a man could become a god. Is not this tendency to deify Jesus more heathen than Christian? Are we not most truly Christian when we cut loose from a heathen propensity and take Jesus simply for the character that he was and for the ideal that he is?

I would not discourage anyone from making the utmost of the human ideal set before us in Jesus, but the present-day protest against conceiving of him as divine does not quite

meet the point. There can be no doubt that the early church—and the church in all later ages, indeed—has sought to give Jesus highest honor; but the explanations which would account for the doctrine of his divinity merely in terms of a desire to honor him fall short. It is true that the more the significance of Jesus grew upon the mind of the church the larger the terms used to describe him. Prophet, Messiah, victor-over-death, virgin-born, Son of God, Logos, second Person of the Trinity —all indicate the increasing depth of the impression which Jesus has made upon the church; and these are all terms of honor, but their significance is more than honorific.

Why is it, then, that the church holds so tightly to the terms and Scriptures and theologies which conceive of Jesus as divine, if it is not to honor Jesus? The answer is, not that the church is trying to lift Christ up to God, but to think of God in terms of Christ. The essential is not merely the Godlikeness of Christ but the Christlikeness of God. This may seem to be a fine point; but fine as it may be it is significant just now as marking a shift in emphasis in theological debate from that which we used to hear a quarter-century ago. The former debate spoke in terms of the divinity, or deity, of Christ. The present

emphasis is on the Christlikeness of Deity. The course of church history does indeed look as if men were trying to give increasing honor to Christ, but, after all, the back-lying aim has been and is to interpret God in terms of Christ. The various theological formulas have been so many instruments of such interpretation. It is true that some thinkers have so spoken as to make the theological phrasing an end-in-itself. Then we have had a predominantly intellectualistic ecclesiasticism, with assent to a creed the official requisite to salvation, and with neglect of the spiritual purpose of the intellectual statement—that purpose being the enforcement of the belief that God is like Christ. All the elaborately contrived doctrines of miracle, of incarnation, of trinity, of atonement, no matter how difficult to understand intellectually, are clear enough in their central intent, namely, to show God in Christ. Understand, I do not for a moment maintain that the soundness of the aim makes the methods intellectually sound. Back in the early ages of the church there were some—probably only a few—thinkers who taught that Satan had a claim on the souls of men which only the death of the Son of God could satisfy, and that God met the obligation by sending the Son to the cross. As an intellectual construc-

tion this theory arouses only amused pity to-day, but its aim is as self-evident as that of any theory of atonement ever built, namely, to declare that God himself will do whatever is necessary for the salvation of men. All our formal theological creeds may be likewise inadequate as creeds, but all that are central aim at enforcing the belief that not only in Christ do we see God, but in God we see Christ.

What is the difference between the older emphasis and the newer? Not much in actual statement, and yet a good deal in focus and perspective. If we think of the teaching of the divinity of Christ as resulting from progressive exaltation of Christ, we may think of God as, indeed, including Christ, but as including much besides—with God as an all-inclusive Absolute reconciling everything in himself. If in God we see essential Christ-likeness, the focus is a little different. Christ is of God as the center of his being, the Word which is constantly in the Divine Mind. In short, the Christlikeness of God has been central to Christianity, and the church will not likely surrender a theology which seems to defend this Christlikeness except for a theology which defends it better. That such better statements will be forthcoming in the

future I see no reason to doubt. Every age must phrase the Christlikeness of God in its own terms, and even the best formulations thus far made leave much to be desired. I repeat that we must keep clear the difference between the aim of the formulas and the formulas themselves. An intellectualist might revel in a formal theology without a trace of interest in the Christlikeness of God, and a firm believer in such Christlikeness might regard all the formal creeds with weariness and distaste. It is the intention of the present treatment to look at the commoner philosophical and theological statements about God—the so-called "attributes of God"—to see how they must be interpreted if we think of God as Christlike.

Someone declares, however, that he is not yet satisfied with thus raising question about God when we study Christ. Are we not wiser, at least more sensible, to keep close to the Christ of the human ideal? Why is it necessary to take on all these theories of the divinity of Jesus when the splendid humanity of Jesus stands on its own right before us? To which I reply that I am not trying to get anyone to accept theories of the divinity of Jesus. I am trying instead to show the direction in which these theories point. They

who insist on the humanity of Jesus must not forget that this humanity itself is always pointing out beyond itself and is in part responsible for the theories. The very perfection of the humanity starts theories of divinity. I repeat, however, that I am not concerned with the theories as such. They may all be true or all false, or some may be true and some may be false, or all may be partly true and partly false; at the best all are inadequate. As theories they have to stand or fall on their intellectual and logical merits, but I am not now thinking of their logic. I am thinking of them as effects of a cause. That cause is the conviction that God is like unto Christ, and that in Christ we find God. As long as the church holds to that conviction theologies will be forthcoming to attempt to explain the relation of Christ to God; but I am not to concern myself in this treatment with the theologies, except to ask whether they themselves square with their own fundamental aim, to establish the Christ-likeness of God.

An Irrepressible Question

Why should we, however, keep raising the question about God? Because that is the one question with which every age is sooner or

later concerned, and that is the question especially before our own age. I said a moment ago that young people are peculiarly prone to impatience with theological inquiries, by which I mean that they are impatient with the conventional and technical theological phrasing of inquiries. Young people of to-day, nevertheless, are always asking about God. Even if they take Jesus just as the human ideal they cannot move an inch into the study of Jesus without having questions about God arise squarely across the path. The question as to the Divine Nature is more and more insistent to-day. The demand is not so much for a proof of the existence of God as for a conception of his character in which we can trust. I do not know that there is much out-and-out materialism in current philosophy. The fact that the universe is intelligible at all means to most thinkers that it is founded in thought. The difficulty is with the nature of the Thinker—or rather of the Doer. The universe may be uttering speech—and intelligible speech—up to a point, but is the speech worth listening to? At the same moment that the universe is more and more conceded to be the expression of thought, there is more and more doubt as to whether the thought is worth expressing.

It may be that the whole thought is too large for our grasp. We may be like children who have learned to read without yet being able to master the meaning of the whole volume, or page, or sentence. We know what the words mean, but the sentences are still too vast for us. Or it may be that some meanings of the universe are not intended for us at all, or not intended for us yet. For example, we used to conceive of the material universe as created primarily for men. Everything in the universe was to be judged by its fitness for a human purpose. We should with difficulty hold such a view to-day. It is open to us to believe that everything in the universe is to be judged by its reference to the purposes of persons—or a Person—but hardly by reference to human persons. This world may, indeed, be just the kind of world best fitted for the moral training of men, at least in the first steps of that training, but could that have been the only purpose in the creation of the world? It is a marvelous power that mind has of reading off some information concerning an astronomical universe which can be measured only in "light-years," but we cannot believe that the immeasurable reaches of stellar space were put forth just to exercise the mind of man. This does not at all imply

that I would belittle the human intelligence. The physical home of man may indeed be an insignificant, off-the-road corner in space, but the mind that can find that out is not itself insignificant, and the power to read off the messages as to the distances of the stars, and their constitution, and their probable past and future, makes this speck of cosmic dust on which we spin through space of mighty meaning. Still, one of the tokens of the greatness of the mind of man is its unwillingness to believe that all this physical universe exists merely that man may understand it. The universe may well be the best for the purpose of man's moral development, but one sign of that fitness might be that it was not intended for man alone. In some respects the universe seems to be what it is and to do what it does pretty much on its own account—it being the privilege of man to fit himself into the scheme of things as best he may. The further his knowledge reaches the further the spread of the unknown out beyond. The more he learns the more there is to learn, which is to say, the more he learns the less he knows. For with the increase of the knowledge of the processes by which the world moves there is the increase of the sorrow which arises from increasing inability to make out what it is

all about. Knowledge in any field leadeth to mystery.

There is not much need of my speaking of the problem of pain, except to say that we are about as far off from understanding its purpose as the first man who ever felt a twinge or an ache. Oh, of course, we may prattle glibly about the beneficent uses of pain—about its efficacy as a warning, and about its being the foil against which we know pleasure; and all this has its trace of value. Here, again, however, it seems most reasonable to say that we find ourselves in a universe in which pain is a feature, and that we adjust ourselves to pain and make what use of it we can. In the life of almost any individual there is more pain than he can use for moral and spiritual purposes. With many it comes in such volume as to leave no strength for learning any lessons; and with some its usefulness as a warning is marred by the fact that it starts too late and continues so long as to be worse than the danger it is warning against. If we should see medicinal plants growing by the ten million and then conclude that these plants were for the healing of men whose numbers never reach beyond a few score, we should probably soon revise our conclusion into the more modest one that the plants are here and the

men can use them. Minimize the fact of pain all we can, discount it as much as we please, there is still more left than we can explain on any theory that the race has yet heard. Moreover, when we think of animal pain, where presumably no moral values are being wrought out, the mystery becomes densely opaque. A world in which men suffer for the sake of moral development could be construed in intelligible terms, if the development and the suffering were in some reasonable proportion to one another; but on the problem of animal suffering all human wisdom is dumb. There is simply no making anything of it by man's reason.

Men have about given up the possibility of finding a God whom they can fully understand. Of old it was said that his thoughts are not as our thoughts nor his ways like our ways. The search, then, has become that for a God whom we can trust, when we cannot understand him. If, indeed, men are what the Christian revelation conceives them to be—immortal beings with illimitable reaches of possible development before them—they can well afford to possess their souls in patience while waiting for larger light. They could have no ground of complaint if the Divine Being placed them for a time in conditions which they could not possi-

bly understand. There might be every reason in the divine wisdom for doing thus. The earth might be the best conceivable place in which to start a race like ours—and yet have a score of other purposes with little connection with men.

So our demand for Christ to-day comes not out of the evidences of order we see in the world, but out of the meaninglessness of the world for our minds. If a believer declares that he discerns the evidences of reason in the world and that therefore he accepts the Christian revelation of God, well and good; but for most men the actual movement of thought is not so much from a world of reason to a God whom they can understand, as from a world of mystery to a God whom they cannot understand, but whom they can trust. If God is like unto Christ, in some respects the mystery becomes deeper than ever, but to a God in Christ we can certainly fasten our faith. Our confidence increases at the moment when our knowledge shrinks.

The Search for Power

The other important reason for accepting God as in Christ comes out of the difficulty of realizing in our lives that human ideal which we spoke of as in Christ, as long as we take

Christ merely as an ideal. I repeat again that I have not the slightest objection to what might be called the total humanizing of the Christ life in regard to its actual earthly conditions. I mean by this the explanation of miracle, for example, in terms of laws which may be intelligible to us, though my expectations in this regard are slight indeed. I at present see no way of accounting for the miracles of Jesus by any laws now in our grasp, but I have no objection to such interpretations if they can bear the weight necessarily put upon them. I mean that the divineness of the life in Christ might conceivably be expressed so humanly as to enforce the fine word of Dr. Henry van Dyke that in Christ we see the human side of God himself, as if humanity were an essential of the divine life. Strip the life of Jesus of everything suggestive of physical miracle; let everything come within the range of the human, so to speak—would that of itself make the ideal in Christ an imitable ideal, capable of being seized and lived out into expression by men on earth? I do not think so. Power to attain the ideal might be lacking. The ideal would, indeed, be most glorious to contemplate, but there would be nothing in it itself to make one like unto it. The more complete the perfection of the ideal

the more likely would it be to discourage the ordinary man. We have geniuses in the realms of literature and art and of invention. It is indeed sound advice to tell the young mind to imitate Shakespeare, or Michael Angelo, or Watt, but the more the ordinary mind learns about genius the more it despairs of imitation. Genius is, indeed, full of light for the guidance of men, but it is not largely imitable in those characteristics which make it genius. How often we have heard a man great in art or practical achievement try to tell the secret of his own success! What platitudes he utters! He tells us, it may be, that his success is due to hard work. No doubt he would not have succeeded if he had not worked, but that explanation gets us nowhere. The great man himself does not know his own secret. His achievement may stand out clearly as a benefaction to all mankind to the end of time, but his own genius cannot be reproduced by others.

Now, this is especially true in the realm of character. Character can be imitated only to a slight degree. Moreover, the wear and tear of daily living is such that men tire out in the pursuit of the good life. With the best intentions men get discouraged by repeated failures. They do not definitely give up, it may be, but

they loosen hold of the higher principles and cease to care. The chief tragedies of the moral life come of this moral weariness.

The most deadening question one can ask as to the moral life is "What is the use?" When life is young there is a tingle about the moral battle on its own account; but the years come on without fail. All sorts of compromises have to be made as practical adjustments to the world in which we live. Legitimate hopes are thwarted, griefs settle down upon us, power begins to slacken. The mockery of death is on every hand. Then comes the question, "What is the use?" This does not mean that a man who has fought a noble battle all his life is about to cease fighting. It does not mean that he will give himself up to selfish indulgence. It does mean that he has lost the zest of the moral struggle. He may hang on grimly to the end, but with the inner fire burning low. To exhort such a man to imitate Christ is about like advising a poor artist who has come to middle life with a sense of failure to imitate Raphael. He would gladly imitate Christ if he could, but he lacks the power.

I do not wish my putting of this matter to be so extreme as to leave the impression that every man who imitates Christ as a human ideal comes thus to despair. There are rare

souls who find in what seems to them the meaninglessness of the universe a challenge to inner rectitude. They look to the coming of night without dismay. They greet death and everything else with a cheer. They aver that if the moral life is to be but for a few brief instants, they will nevertheless hold these instants as the supreme opportunity. They ask nothing but the chance at such instants.

It is the custom in some quarters not to take profession of devotion to this gloomy creed very seriously. There is indeed about a good deal of such profession a suggestion of moral snobbery, as if the devotees scorned the moral aids which common folk need, and gave themselves to a high and rarified morality on its own account. Moreover, while it seems unfair to say so, some of the adherents to this set of negations make free and easy adjustments to the present order of things, adjustments which do not suggest any desperate moral rigor in practice.

Still, the statement of devotion to the moral values on their own account is not to be dismissed lightly. There is so much in religious thought and practice not moral at all that it is a relief to find the moral on its own account so exalted. It is as if one should say that these moral values themselves are of such

consequence that a few fleeting instants of gazing upon them are worth more than eternities of contemplation of all other values whatsoever. The moral ideals belong to the timeless realm, though we may have no considerable chance to think of them. Now, I repeat there is a worth here that we must not forget. In the Christian system the moral realities stand at the center, and stand there on their own account. Some philosophers are seriously and sincerely trying to strip those realities of everything which they consider nonessential.

Can they, however, carry the stripping process so far? Does moral value remain valuable when it is thus taken by itself without clear relation to the system of actualities, or with apparently so little essential connection with that system? These thinkers all seem hesitant to push a like stripping process to other values. Take the intellectual values. All thinkers, of course, insist upon truth, else there would be no reason for debating. How long could they preach an utter devotion to truth if they did not believe in truth as holding for the system of things? Of course one may say, as did John Stuart Mill, that two and two may make five in some other planet, but nobody will take that seriously. Truth,

however, insists upon being taken seriously. The scientist may, indeed, be discovering truths of only relative importance, but underneath all his study is the assumption of law that holds throughout the universe. Just how long science would go forward if there were no assumption of such law is doubtful.

It is interesting to note what a tough problem this question as to truth constitutes for those who protest that moral values are not necessarily to be conceived of as holding good for a universe. Think of the plight of those moralists whose morality is avowedly a lack of morality. Their advice is that men follow out each his own impulses, no matter what those impulses may be. In contemplating the consequences of such advice the advisers are marvelously complacent at breaches of customary morality having to do with sex relations, for example, but they do not seem so enthusiastic in advising men to tell lies, if the impulse toward self-realization takes the direction of lying. At least they would not advise too many freedom-seekers to take to lying at the same time. The reason, of course, is that if there are too many liars there is no basis for living together, or getting along together in communities whatever. If, however, we should follow out the implications of the

ordinary, everyday assumption that men are telling the truth we should find that those assumptions carry us pretty far. The pursuit of truth as an ideal, and the assumption of truth as a basis for getting along together, are in scientific and practical life precisely similar to that which we make in the religious life when we conceive of God as like Christ. The assumption is necessary in each realm to make the life in that realm—scientific search, or practical activity, or the imitation of the human ideal in Christ—worth while.

At this juncture someone remarks that as a matter-of-fact the ordinary religious life—that is to say, the life of the ordinary believer—makes no assumptions whatever, or no reasoned assumptions. I am willing to concede this. Any minister who has served for any length of time in pastorates knows the haphazard, hand-to-mouth existence in spiritual concerns characteristic of masses of church attendants. What religious experience there is in many such lives began with the conventional instruction in the home or at Bible School and went but a little distance at the best. The life is lived in unconscious dependence upon spiritual food picked up here and there, upon the religious atmosphere of the church community, upon prayer which may never be

very serious except in moments of real or imagined crisis. In other words, men live in the realm of religious experience just about as in the other realms. They are not careful reasoners, or reasoners at all. Their loyalty to their country, for example, and their loyalty to their church are much of a piece. There can be no doubt of either loyalty, nor can there be any doubt of their embarrassment if they are asked to give reasons for their patriotism or their faith. The ordinary human being does not tend to philosophizing, or even to intense thoughtfulness, in any phase of his daily experience.

Still, there are unconscious assumptions even in such experience. The ordinary believer has, in evangelical circles, connected Christ with God. To be sure, his notion is altogether unsystematic, but the notion is real, nevertheless. Speak to him of cutting that connection and he is at a loss. He may not be able to tell why the connection should not be cut, but he does not wish it cut. Under pressure he will accept, or hospitably listen to, the crudest theories of Christ's divinity rather than give up that divinity. Or, if he cannot believe in the divinity in the old form, he is likely to become increasingly indifferent to all religious appeal.

Now there are, in spite of this attitude of unreasoned assumption on the part of masses of believers, increasing numbers of persons who do try to think as far as thought will carry them in religion. Such persons desire to scrutinize the assumptions they make and to pull them out into the full light. They find it increasingly hard to follow an ideal as a bare ideal. They are honest enough with themselves to recognize that they need help. They find help in the belief that God himself is like unto the Christ they are trying to follow.

We are not yet through with objections. This type of help is not itself an aid to some. It seems to suggest that a man is not himself adequate to the moral task of living a life like that of Christ, and must look to a force not himself to win the battle for him.

That some Christian prayer and testimony do suggest divine aid of dubious worth there can be no doubt, but I am not now thinking of aid which comes as some miraculous increase of the soul's forces. I have in mind the encouragement and spiritual strength which reach men in the moral struggle from reliance on the revelation of God in Christ.

Think how much depends in the moral struggle upon our conception of God, or upon our conception of the nature of the universe

if we will not admit the existence of God. Let the moral ideal stand out before us, on its own account. I do not see how we can escape asking ourselves as to the significance of that ideal for the universe itself. It is all well enough to say that the ideal is what it is on its own account, but the questions surge up nevertheless. Has the ideal no meaning for the universe outside ourselves? I repeat that this question is just as relevant as that of the scientist as to whether the laws which he finds in his laboratory hold good outside the laboratory.

Further, there are intimate problems affecting peace of conscience in relation to the ideal. What about mistakes and failures—past, present, and to come? The system of nature, if it is only a system of law, picks up mistakes and successes alike and carries them out to consequences. Here, again, we are reminded that the moral ideal is an end-in-itself—and so on and on. The question, however, will not down. Is the universe in which we live friendly to the pursuit of the moral ideal? Does it make any difference to the universe whether a man tries to be righteous or not? Is the world in which we are placed kindly to the man who makes mistakes, or hostile, or indifferent? Is a new start after a blunder

possible? Or does the blunder trail forever at our heels?

I admit again and again that I am quite aware that all this means just nothing at all to hosts of conventionally good people. Such persons, important and indispensable as they are, do not take the moral struggle with the seriousness of the fundamentally moral man, moral in the same degree of earnestness that marks genuine artists or scientists in pursuit of ideals. The moral ideal of Christianity is not that of a merely conventional code. The ordinary man—I mean the ordinary man so far as his devotion to his moral ideals is concerned—does the best he can and lets it go at that. His advice for those who make mistakes is to set them right as far as possible and then forget them. I do not declaim against this mood, but I do insist that it does not contain within itself the promise of moral advance for the seriously minded, for whom the ideal is ever reaching out beyond, or, rather, stretching back toward them from beyond their reach. We who try to take the moral ideal seriously arise in the morning and think that we shall be nearer the goal at nightfall, but sunset finds the goal far beyond where it appeared at sunrise. The longer we live the more unworthy we appear to ourselves

when compared with the ideal we have sought. As with the individual so with the race. Leaders have always avowed that just over the next hill has lain Utopia, but when men have mounted the hill, not hills but mountains lie farther beyond. True, we make advance. Looking back over the road we see that we have indeed come a long distance, but the longer we go the longer seems the distance yet to travel. Thousands of years from now the teachers of individual and social morality will tell men that the world of moral conquest has hardly begun. There is no discharge in this war.

If it be asked how the case is any different in the realm of morals than in science, we admit that the pursuit of the scientific ideal is likewise without end, but the scientist more readily assumes that the universe is friendly to his task. It does not seem an effort or strain to him to believe that law reigns throughout the universe. Say what he will, that assumption underlies all that he does. Moreover, his failures do not carry with them such a sense of ill-desert. His mistakes do not haunt his memory. He is whole-heartedly devoted to his task and does not worry over failures. Why cannot the moralist likewise take his own good intentions for granted and cease to worry?

Of course he can do this even if he feels that he is in a hostile universe. He can defy the universe, making allowances in his own mind for his own mistakes, rejoicing in his own strength. This, however, is in the end likely to be futile, especially if we are trying to build up a moral society. A man might likewise defy society all his life in the name of a superior devotion to morality. The spectacle would be bracing and exhilarating, but it would be futile in the end. If we can make the assumption that the universe is at bottom constitutionally moral, just as the scientist assumes that it is constitutionally intelligible, everything changes for the better. The moral struggle seems to be worth while. We are helped not by some strength that dynamically empowers us and carries us along by compulsion, but by the assurance itself that we are on the right track and that we shall finally arrive. The reenforcement of the soul comes through spiritual channels, through the admission that the goal is, indeed, now far out of reach, but that our paths lead toward it, that others are traveling thither, that all is in the hands of a God like unto Christ, who takes intentions for deeds, who helps not by miraculous wonders but by opening up the best in the life through spiritual contacts.

The struggle is stern enough at the best, but the sternness itself is joy once the worthwhileness of the moral attempt becomes clear. If God is like Christ, the attempt is surely worth while.

If, however, we only had a full revelation of what the life of Jesus was on earth! The critics have so cut into the records that we cannot claim to know as much about Jesus as we ought if we are to think of God as like unto him. We have all found that the attempt to meet our moral duties by asking what Jesus would do is empty, so far as getting light on a detailed situation is concerned. We find it increasingly hard to know the mind of Christ. Has not an outstanding scholar within the ranks of the church recently told us that even many of Christ's teachings about God show the limitations of the theology of his time?

All this has nothing to do with the main point I am trying to urge, namely, that we have in Christ a revelation of God which we can trust when we do not understand. Let us imagine, if our theology will not allow us to grant it, that God could live on earth as a man. What should we desire most in God living under human conditions? Should we ask for manifestations of power and of knowledge? Probably we should; but when we had

pulled ourselves together to ask the question most worth while, what could we ask except as to a revelation of the spirit in which the universe is carried forward? What does it all mean? At what does it all aim? Does the moral spirit count? Is that the chief fact about the universe?

I have read many protests against the claims for the divinity of Christ. I have read very few based on the assumption that we do not have in Christ a revelation of a spirit and temper which we should like to see established as holding good for God. Can we think of any spirit which we should sooner see established at the heart of the universe than that of Christ? Can we think of any purpose which we should prefer to believe to be the purpose of God rather than the righteous love revealed in Christ?

The central spirit—the moral quality of the life of Christ—is clear no matter whether we can find in the Gospels a detailed guide for moral conduct or not. I admit the uselessness of asking what Jesus would do as suggesting detailed commands as to what we should do. It is not possible to make the Gospels a set of ethical regulations. All we can do is to catch the spirit of Jesus and strive to live in that spirit. The only answer there can be as to

what Jesus would do, is that Jesus would do whatever we ought to do, if he were put in our place.

I urge once more that this search for specific rules is off the track. We have to find our own way through the detailed intricacies of the moral tangle for ourselves. A codified set of rules for us might be completely disheartening. What we crave is assurance as to the worth-whileness of our struggle. Probably it is a mercy that we do not know more about the actual deeds of Jesus than we do, for many of us are so literally minded, that, with more detail, we should miss the spirit altogether. The Gospels set forth the spirit of Christ so that anyone can follow him—or accept him as the revelation of the nature of God himself. Critical study of the Scriptures has only made this essential revelation clearer.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE PERSONALITY

EVEN at the cost of wearisome iteration I must make it clear that I am holding up Christlikeness as a clue to the character of God, trying to see how we can test the attributes usually called divine by the measure of likeness to Christ. I am assuming that if we are to keep to the Christian idea of God we must maintain that the moral attributes of God find their interpretation in Christ. In discussing his own theory of the relation of Christ to God, the late Dr. A. M. Fairbairn drew a distinction between the ethical and the metaphysical attributes of God, and made the metaphysical subordinate to and secondary to the ethical. I think Fairbairn was on the right road. It is not necessary to subscribe to his doctrine of Christ to see that his subordination of the metaphysical to the ethical is fundamentally Christian. Of course we cannot formally prove the subordination, but we cannot prove that God exists at all, for that matter. We are trying to fashion the most adequate conception of God we can. Christianity cannot be Christian if it does not

put the moral attributes above all others in its exposition of the divine.

We look first at the fundamental question of the personality of God, though, of course, personality is something in itself and not an attribute. It is instructive to note how many believers in Christ to-day actually speak of God as impersonal. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they shrink from using the term "personal" in reference to God. A good deal of this hesitancy is altogether intelligible. We often use the word "personal" to denote some of the weaker aspects of human experience; memory, feeling, will-power are all subject to such rise and fall of rhythm and are so dependent on material conditions both inside and outside of our physical organisms that we draw back from speaking of God as personal. The difficulty here manifestly arises through taking human personality as the only form of personality. The subjection to physical conditions may be merely a human limitation, while personality as such may be self-consciousness and self-control, conceived of as in divine form above ebb or flow. Some speak of God as being more than personality, which is correct enough if we mean more than human personality.

I was not thinking, however, of the more-

than-personality idea when I spoke of the many who accept Christ while denying personality to God. I had in mind those who conceive of the forces of the universe as at bottom impersonal, the forces themselves being either materialistic, or idealistic, or, in the latest terminology, "neutral." They would be willing, many of them, to pronounce Christ the finest flower of the universe, the apex and climax of creation, but they would make him nevertheless the outcome of an impersonal process.

Now, in the Christian examination of various world-views the most important question is as to the adequacy—especially the moral adequacy—of the views. The emphasis is not primarily upon scientifically ascertained bodies of fact, or upon strict logical processes, important as these are. The emphasis is upon adequacy. A world-view may be in itself consistent enough, or it may be woven throughout of excellent logical and scientific texture, but it may lack in size. A naval architect might build a vessel according to the most approved designs and yet never dream of starting the vessel across the Atlantic. It might not be big enough for that. It might not be able to carry within itself its own supplies. It might not be large enough to carry an engineer or a captain. Or waiving the question of size, a

view may not be adequate to the quality of a result which it assumes to explain.

The indifference of many thoughtful Christians to arguments against Christianity finds its explanation here. Contemplating the Christ, the Christian feels that the theory which would make the determining forces of the universe impersonal is inadequate. The theory is not big enough, and it is not good enough. The critic wonders if the Christian can be sincere. Cannot anyone see the strength of the reasoning against personality in God? The Christian may indeed be duly impressed by the logic, but his answer is likely to be simply that the theory "won't do." He has been steeped in the mind and spirit of Christ so long that the magnitude and richness of that mind and spirit are, for him, not to be accounted for on an impersonal basis. In this the Christian is, after all, standing for a rational faith.

Faith of some sort is underneath all our world-views. We have to make assumptions and ventures. Since we have to exercise faith in any event, the rational course would seem to be to believe something worth believing. Consider the strain upon a mind schooled in the study of the Christ to try to believe that Christ is, after all, just the fine flower of the

material forces. I suppose that this would imply that the spiritual balance of Jesus was the outcome of a phenomenally steady equilibrium in the part of the physical universe with which he was connected, namely, his own physical organism. For the period of a short life, but long enough to mark the destinies of the race, that part of the physical universe which we could call the body of Jesus came into such stability of equilibrium and such thorough symmetry that the Christ-life was the result. The impatience of the Christian is not to be wondered at when he hears theorizing like this. Of course I have put the materialistic position baldly, but I have not done wrong to the essentials of such theory. Any reasoning which puts the physical factors in the position of primary importance is not caricatured by the above phrasing. All such theories have to maintain in the end what they might as well say in the beginning—that the Christ-life, and all other lives filled with the Christ-spirit, are the outcome of the play of physical forces reaching peculiarly happy results. There is nothing in the reasoning to forbid the contention that with a different turn or twist the forces might have come to as unhappy a result as in the career of Judas, for example.

No, the theory won't do. To be sure, anyone who recognizes the existence of material forces at all has to make place for those forces. For Christianity the incarnation means that matter can be used to set forth a moral and spiritual revelation. Matter can be more honored and glorified in Christianity than in any other view of the world. To make the material supreme, however, is for the believer in Christ impossible. The believer does not feel called upon to meet the materialistic reasoning step by step, though he is confident that the reasoning can be met. He does not feel called upon to deny the pressure and power of the physical. That would be absurd. He simply declares that to one who thinks of God as Jesus thought of God, and set forth that thought in life, the explanation of such thought and life in merely physical terms falls short. It will not do.

Another form of impersonalism is idealistic. The fundamental fact in the world is thought. By what seems to the plain man a most curious reversal of things as they appear, thought in this idealism seems to precede thinkers. Common sense would naturally conclude that before there can be thought there must be a thinker, but impersonalism turns it all the other way around. Of course a theist would say that

before there can be a finite thinker there must be a thought in the Divine Mind calling for the creation of that thinker. This, however, is not what the impersonalist means. He means that thought somehow gets itself personalized into thinkers.

Much Christian speech lends itself to this philosophy. We say that Christ is Love Incarnate. We adore God as Wisdom and Love. All this is, indeed, without thought of the logical implication, but aids the idea of God as impersonal. Here again we pass by the merely philosophical argument and raise the question of adequacy. We must think of God as adequate to the revelation in Christ. If Christ is the Divine Wisdom and Love personalized, the divine itself has taken a step forward in such personalization, for the concrete and personal are morally more worthy than the abstract and impersonal. The situation here is not quite the same as in the process of scientific generalization. In generalization the scientist does indeed strip an idea of every possible vestige of the concrete, for the sake of finding a formula which will prove good over the widest possible area. The scientist is aware, however, that he does arrive at a generalization by stripping off the concrete. He moves by emptying rather than by filling.

The generalization which he at last reaches may in its way be useful, but it is not a creation. To return to the world which he has left the scientist has to put back into place all that he took out. If he had nothing but the generalization to work with, if all that he left out were to be blotted from his memory, he could not find his way back at all, except possibly by the use of an imagination which would have nothing to work on. Let a thinker abstract from all extended objects everything except the one consideration that they are extended in space. Grant for the sake of argument that those teachers are right who tell us that our idea of space itself is built up by abstraction from extended objects. By abstraction, then, we build up the idea of space. Now, what have we? An interesting subject of thought, about which we can utter many profound observations, but to make our observations of any consequence we have to get back to the world which we left out. Our generalizations about space may indeed supply us with material for noble contemplation, and may indeed quicken us to many a thrill of intellectual delight, but the thrill, after all, has not much tingle of actual life.

All this is suggestive for the moral and spiritual life. There is, indeed, a glory about

abstractions like Love, Righteousness, Justice, but these are abstractions. We cannot get the God of Christ by abstraction, by dropping out the concrete which is the glory of the Christ-life. If Christ is concrete love while God is abstract love, then Christ is more than and better than God. Here, again, we have a view which is inadequate. It will not do.

An odd philosophical theory has appeared in recent years which would have us believe that it is neither materialistic nor idealistic. The ultimate basic realities are declared to be "neutrals." What seems from one angle an impression on a photographic apparatus is from another angle an impression on the retina of the eye. When the eye sees the "neutral" it takes complete possession of a transparent bit of reality just as the reality is. These neutrals follow one another in a constant stream with more or less resemblance among themselves. What appears to be identity is in the last analysis this likeness among the coming and going neutrals. It is fair to say that the theory makes a distinction between existence and value. In the midst of all this flow, the mind can seize truth which is, on the value side, truth on its own account. There is room also, according to the theory, for the beautiful and the good. As existence

there is no place for God, freedom, or immortality. In spite of this, however, one of the leading expounders of the doctrine provides room for what he calls the free man's worship.

It requires no keen philosophical expertness to see that this doctrine has appropriated outright the activity of mind with all its marvelous powers to relate and to compare and to pass judgment. Just how we could ever use the word "neutral" except as the expression of a judging mind is a mystery. To judge that something is neutral is obviously to say that it is neither one thing nor another, but this implies holding at least three things before the mind for judgment, and this implies further some mental activity set over against material on which it can act. The entire apparatus of mind and minds has to be utilized to get this theory into operation.

It may seem odd that I mention the "neutrals" at all, since my aim is not primarily philosophical, and since the theory itself avowedly makes no place for the existence of God. I take the theory as suggesting a remark or two concerning a type of thinking which to-day draws a line between judgments of value and judgments as to existence. Many devout men, of high spiritual worth, seem

content to affirm judgments as to values without troubling themselves as to whether anything corresponding to those values is to be found in actual existence or not. The theory that I mention is attractive to them as suggesting the worthiness of a life that stands over against a passing stream of existences, each inconsequential in itself, each dying as soon as born, and seizing out of the stream ideas of eternal value, the word "eternal" meaning not endless existence, but timelessness, as of ideal value beyond time altogether.

There is something appealing about such a doctrine when it comes from a seeker of the highest ideals; and there is something suggestive of the method by which such a seeker of ideals actually proceeds. For many a man —perhaps for most men—the world of actual occurrences is a procession, meaningless in itself except for what can be snatched out of it to help in the day's living. For the nobler mind, on the other hand, the passing procession of events, events often meaningless both in themselves and in their contexts, supplies the opportunity, or at least the occasion, for grasping ideals suggested by events in themselves remote from anything ideal.

On the part of the ordinary seeker for ideals, however, there is the more or less conscious

assumption that in pursuing an ideal he is on the way to the real. To make the assumption outright and openly that there is nothing real corresponding to the ideal is too cool for the ordinary man. It is in the end to subject the ideal to a killing frost.

Why, however, all this reference to the ordinary man? Just because I am trying to find a religious statement that will mean something to the ordinary man. Dr. J. S. MacKenzie, in his little book on *Ultimate Values*, speaks of that doctrine of immortality which makes the soul live merely "in other lives made better" as having worth, indeed, but worth chiefly for the extraordinary person. For the ordinary human being such immortality would mean just nothing at all. We cannot believe that the higher values of the universe are to be the property of a select number of rare spirits, a sort of spiritual privileged class. There is no aristocracy less attractive than that of supposedly choice souls, most of whom have had more than usual opportunity in this existence, speaking as if they had plucked the higher ideal meanings of life, and then leaning comfortably back and telling us that they are not concerned as to whether these ideals root in reality or not. It may be fine for a privileged individual to testify that he has found

such uplift in the thought of God as the crown of ideals that he does not care whether God actually exists or not, but this is worse than nothing to the man whose thought and life are our aim. Understand, we are moving in the realm of belief. We are avowedly not trying to prove that there is a God like unto Christ. We admit that the problem is one of belief, and we are trying to show that the essential Christian belief is that God is like unto Christ. We are not, however, surrendering to the impersonalists. They do not prove impersonalism. For one reason or another impersonalism suits them better as a belief than does personalism as applied to God. Among the elements that count in shaping the Christian belief is familiarity with the mind and temper of Christ. The Christians believe that the mind and temper of Jesus cannot be interpreted as the mere accompaniment of any set of impersonal forces. Of course it is not fair to play on a word in this discussion, but the word "neutrals" does happily hit off the inadequacies of some of these doctrines. It is impossible to account for the fullness and intensity of the moral passion of the Christ life, as that life was lived in the actual Christ, or is approximated in the life of his followers, by anything neutral. We

are dealing with positive forces and factors which neutrals can never explain.

We repeat that we do not feel called on to consider, with such philosophical powers as we may muster, the critical objections to these theories. We may not be able to state any objections. We can, however, raise the issue of adequacy. There is not enough in the theories. Moreover, they are not only not large enough, but they are not fine enough. Take Christ just as a cosmic product. The forces these theories deal with are not big enough or fine enough to explain Christ. They lack both the requisite quantity and the requisite quality. We believe that only a Christlike God can account for a Godlike Christ.

The opponents of Christian beliefs have taken it altogether too easy as to the inadequacy of impersonal causes to produce Christlike character. All these systems are confronted with what might be called the problem of good. It is often said that the stiff problem for believers in a personal God is the problem of evil. In an earlier section I spoke of that mystery of physical pain before which all human wisdom is dumb. The Christian may indeed sit dumb before this problem, but he does not ignore it. In his own experience he

meets acute distress for which he can find no adequate reason whatsoever. He is willing to admit that the advance in the understanding of the reason for suffering in the universe has consisted chiefly in progressively showing the inadequacy of reasons. For example, the glory of the book of Job is in its frankly facing the problem of woe, in openly declaring that the attempt to solve human distress on the ground of the ill-desert of the sufferer falls short. It is a vast gain to have attained this insight, but Job does not teach that he has solved the problem. It is better to have no explanation than an explanation which conceives of suffering as punishment.

Now, it is unusual to find such openness of mind as this among the opponents of the belief in a personal God when they confront the problem of good. Most of them do not seem to know that there is such a problem. They demand with glib assurance that the believers in God account for evil and do not appear aware that, on their own basis, they have to account for good. Moreover, there is nothing inherently absurd in holding to belief in the God of Christ while admitting around us on all sides dark mysteries which we cannot explain. This present inexplicability, however, does not argue that the mysteries never can

be explained. It means a task at present beyond us, beyond us probably because of our sheer lack of knowledge. The problem of good is, for the thinker who derides Christian theism, of quite another order. A wise and good God might, for reasons as yet inexplicable, make a place for pain in the world and might permit moral evil, but a God who is nothing but a name for a set of impersonal forces for which morality means nothing, is simply not equal to the task of explaining the good.

Apart from aberrations here and there in schools of criticism which speak without responsibility, the moral uniqueness of Jesus is everywhere granted. It is one of the strangest phenomena in the history of thinking—this admission of the moral supremacy of Jesus even by the enemies of Christianity without any attempt to explain him! Suppose, for the sake of the argument, we make no claim of divinity for Jesus whatever. Suppose we take him merely as the moral climax of humanity, as the type of good man, or as anything which expresses his admitted moral greatness. Then the critics may reply that the problem is just the same sort as with moral goodness anywhere. Let it be so! How does such goodness—intensely personal, seeking to put

moral values into definitely personal relationships—get into a world where the determining factors are entirely impersonal? Perplexing as is the problem of evil for the Christian personalist, it is nothing in its perplexingness as compared with the problem of good for the impersonalist.

CHAPTER III

THE DIVINE UNITY

We are insisting that the so-called attributes of God must be brought to the test of Christ-likeness. If we are to believe in Christianity at its full value, we have to think of God as Christian. Certain attributes of God which we call metaphysical have been pretty well established in theology, but the metaphysical aspect is subject to the moral aspect in Christian thinking.

We look for a while at the attribute of unity in the Divine Nature. We are most of us fairly sure that if we are to have a worth-while God, that God must be one. It is a long, long stride forward when any people get away from the worship of a host of gods to the worship of one God. Looking out over the havoc wrought in human experience by polytheism we might also say that, paraphrasing Napoleon's word about generalship, one poor god would be better than two good gods, so urgent is the need of unity in carrying forward satisfactory reflection upon the Divine Nature. Metaphysical unity as a basis for the universe we have pretty well accepted. Even the dual-

ists who hold to the separateness of mind and matter maintain that the two work together in a unified system. Of course it is always possible to find flippant critics, like the scoffer who recently declared that there is so little unity in the world that to all appearances the world is being managed by a committee of gods—a bungling committee at that. Even this critic, however, would admit that such a committee would meet in a basic system whose laws rule everywhere. The committee would not likely be conceived of as dividing over the law of gravitation, for example. The great metaphysical quest has been for unity, and unity has been pretty well agreed upon as fundamental. Even those who, like Bertrand Russell, incline to the fancy that space-time, as they call it, is broken up into a cosmic anarchy, nevertheless hold with Einstein to a space-time-gravitation formula universal in its application.

We insist however, that important as is the metaphysical attribute of unity for God, we cannot have a Christian God until we have judged metaphysical attributes from the judgment-seat of the moral. In other words, metaphysical attributes throughout must come to the Christian test; the metaphysical attributes must be weighed by the spirit of Christ.

Some time ago an earnest student of religions expressed surprise that the Mohammedan and Christian systems do not get along better together. His argument was that Islam believes as strongly as Christianity in the unity of God, perhaps more strongly than does Christianity. For Islam God is altogether one, if such an expression can be used. There is not the slightest hesitation as to the impossibility of God's sharing the oneness. There are no personal distinctions in the Godhead for a Mohammedan. The one prophet of God is named indeed, but he is a prophet and nothing more.

This reference to the Islamic faith cogently raises the need of interpreting divine unity in moral as well as in metaphysical terms. Islam built on the metaphysical foundations of ancient Israel but certainly not on the moral foundations, for Mohammed nowhere attains to the moral insight of prophets who lived a thousand years before his time. Islam does give us divine unity. But such unity! The unity of a moral nature set as definitely as the most cruel and selfish barbarians on conquest by sword, and sanctioning as animating motives in that conquest the basest impulses of men, is not an edifying conception of God. Islam is jealous enough in its intent

to keep God a unit. It makes no provision for man's sharing the nature of God, but ends in making God share the nature of man—the worst phases of man's nature at that.

The passion for metaphysical unity is one of the powerful driving energies of the mind; but if we are to have a Christian God, we must set limits in our thinking to the demands of that unity. Too much of our philosophy is bent upon making the universe all one thing or another. Materialism does not necessarily spring out of an unworthy or earth-bound nature. The tendency of materialism in philosophy is toward materialism in life, but materialism does not of necessity arise out of a sordidness of purpose. It arises in part out of this metaphysical passion for unity. To many the forces of the physical universe seem to explain more than any other forces; so what is to prevent one's believing that they may explain everything? At least let us search and see. Here the effective force with many a thinker who most reluctantly surrenders his emphasis on spiritual values is the craving for unity.

Likewise an idealism which dissipates everything—body and soul—into thought does not necessarily proceed from a dry intellectualism. The absolutists in idealism no doubt are as

fond of the joy of concrete existence as are those who have no philosophy at all, but the passion for unity is upon them. There is no denying the pressure of this passion. It is one of the most compelling powers in human thought. If we are to have a universe at all, the philosophers tell us that the very word "universe" itself suggests oneness. Philosophy, for some, is nothing apart from the search for the one in the many. That is the basic assumption of their thought.

Now, this passion for unity in the intellectual realm defeats itself by doing away with the ground of distinction between truth and error. If everything comes alike out of the One, truth and falsity come from the same source. There is no possible ground of decision between them, and the theory which started out to be absolutely logical ends by cutting the props from under all logic whatever.

The plight is worse on the moral side. I have heard theologians speak as if the metaphysical unity of God must be held fast at all costs—and no doubt such unity is important. How much more important is it, however, that the moral unity of God be held fast? We have seen the outcome in the theology of Islam. Islam gives us a unified God, but of

no moral worth after we get him. Islam's God is distinctively a personal unity, but who, outside of Islam, would care to worship him?

I ask indulgence for returning repeatedly to the supremacy of the moral attributes of the divine over the metaphysical. Untold harm has come out of the religious rationalizing which has sought to ground the character of God on something deeper than the ethical. I once heard a foremost theologian declare that we must have some basis firmer than the moral for our understanding of God. This particular theologian was, in deed and spirit, one of the most Christian men I have ever known, but this deliverance of his was far from Christian. If we behold in the thought of Christ the thought of God, we cannot believe that the metaphysical qualities have the right of way. If it be said that Jesus assumed as a matter of course the all-essential metaphysical qualities of God—possibly without ever stopping to think of them—we reply that the moral and spiritual were the focus of the whole experience of Jesus. At the best we can think of the metaphysical qualities only as furnishing the stage for the higher. Our difficulty here is somewhat the same as in our thought of personality for God. We, indeed, attribute personality to God, but then we fall

to thinking of personality in human terms, with all the weakness of human frailty. Then we wonder if, after all, we should not do well to think of God in somewhat solider terms. So with moral unity. The unity in moral purpose in men is so varying and changeful that we naturally incline toward some other unity. It seems easier to relax hold on the moral unity of God than on the metaphysical, or, rather, the pressure for the metaphysical often seems stronger.

Still, we must not put the case here too strongly. The church has indeed always been more or less willing to threaten the metaphysical unity of God for the sake of the moral. I now refer to the more popular thinking rather than the strictly theological. Take, for illustration, the hold that the doctrine of the devil has, or had, for centuries in the thinking, or imagination, of the ordinary Christian. Practically, in the conception of thousands of Christians to-day, the devil is conceived of as everywhere, as knowing everything, as almost almighty. In part this is superstition, an inheritance from pre-Christian heathenism, or an importation into Christianity from without. In part, however, it is an unreasoned but instinctive attempt to make the problem of evil serious for God without

sacrificing the moral unity of God. It requires only a glance, of course, to see how far such a doctrine goes toward imperiling the metaphysical unity of God, but the popular notion is conceived more in respect to the seriousness of the moral struggle than of the metaphysical requirements.

Now, it is not likely that reasoned thought about God will concede the vast powers mentioned above—omniscience, omnipresence, almost omnipotence—to a devil, but it is not likely either that the Christian consciousness will rest in a conception of moral evil which seeks to preserve the metaphysical unity of God at the cost of moral unity. Think how many conceptions of God do strike at his moral unity. Of course impersonal materialism does not concern itself here, but some forms of impersonal idealism are attractive to Christian believers who do not often stop to consider that such idealism—in which the many are mere phases of the One—carries moral evil to the center of the divine. Any strictly deterministic philosophy likewise violates the divine moral life, or makes absurd any raising of question about distinctions of good and evil. Spinoza, it has been said, was the one consistent determinist in that he saw that with determinism there could be no

reason for ever raising the question about determinism—or anything else. All forms of strict monism do have a unity of a kind, a unity in which good and evil lose their differences and merge into one.

The church has fairly well settled down into the belief that the only way that we can preserve the moral unity of God is by the creation of free wills out of whose choices evil starts. It is objected that such creations themselves do away with the metaphysical unity in the universe. Strictly speaking, this must be so. If we are to have absolute metaphysical unity there is no place for even an inch of free choice, but is not insistence upon such unity a quibble? Is it not a play with words? Is not metaphysical unity well enough preserved by such means as divine wisdom could devise against the splitting of the universe into independent diversities? Even the pluralists, of whom we hear so much to-day, who will have it that lives are independent existences with positive power of creation, hold that these lives meet in a system, or plane, that must be a common-to-all. Such loss of metaphysical unity as the free creation of finite wills involves, we shall have to yield to, if we are to preserve the moral unity of the divine. The result will never please the theorist who desires above all

else a compact and tidy universe. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the creation of finite selves makes against tidiness and compactness; but better such looseness than to carry moral evil so deeply into the divine nature as to make it a part of that nature. Better have God struggling to get evil out of men's lives than struggling to get it out of his own. Any familiarity at all with the life of Jesus would show us how foreign to his thought of the divine is moral evil.

Another instance of the insistence of the church on the primacy of the moral is to be found in the persistence with which the mysterious and baffling doctrine of the Trinity has maintained itself through the ages. Of course no one who has read a line of theology would think that the church has taught that God is one and three in the same sense, but the theories have been refractory to handle at the best. I do not think that it is impossible so to state the doctrine as to maintain the metaphysical unity of the Divine, but what I wish to urge is that the church has never been deterred from holding the doctrine because of the threat to metaphysical unity. Without substantial justice indeed, but with unrelenting vigor nevertheless, the critics of Christianity have pointed to the doctrine of the Trinity as

the supreme instance of the church's defiance of reason in its demands upon the intelligence of men. I am not now concerned either to defend this doctrine or to attack it. All I wish is to ask for the reason for its persistence in the face of argument which has seemed to so many to be conclusive. I think the secret of the longevity of the dogma is not merely the pressure to make a place for Christ in the Divine Life, in the sense of granting him divine honors, but, rather, to carry the Christ-spirit into the Divine, or, rather, to reveal the divine as throughout Christlike. The life which men saw in Christ they came to believe in as the life of God himself. They were willing to follow that life even into their theories about the inner constitution of divinity. Moral unity has weighed more than metaphysical unity.

Too confident speculation as to the inner constitution of deity is out of fashion at the present hour, and I think justly so; but while I am on this theme I may as well remark that the danger in the usual ideas of the Trinity is not so much to the metaphysical unity as to the moral unity—the very end which the doctrine has sought to conserve. In seeking for distinctions in the life of the Divine the church has too often made the Father stand for one moral mood and the Son for another.

Or, if the distinction has not been conceived of as strictly personal, Father has often been made to stand as the phase of righteousness, and Son, of Love. This can be so phrased—indeed, often is so phrased—as to imperil the moral unity which the church aims to guard. Take either of two views of the Trinity which have been regarded as at least passably orthodox—one which provides for personal distinction of Father and Son and Spirit in the divine life itself; and the other which treats Father, Son, and Spirit as three manifestations of inherently different phases of the divine life, not individual persons on the one hand, or mere appearances on the other. The difficulty is, I repeat, not chiefly philosophical in such theological construction. There are ways of fairly well meeting the formally philosophical difficulties. The more serious is the threat to the ethical unity. Think of the tendency to put Father and Son over against one another in opposed moods. The Father is, or used to be, conceived of as in wrath and the Son mollifies the wrath with the aid of the Spirit. To what extremes have we not heard evangelistic appeals rush in such representation of the work of the Son! Yet the teaching that God forgives men their sins for Christ's sake lends itself naturally to just such difference of

moral moods in the inner life of Godhead. If, now, we are to think of a complexity in the God life, all the factors, or phases, must be Christlike—that is, if we are to have a Christian God.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIVINE UNCHANGEABLENESS

Much that can be said about the divine unity holds also about the divine unchangeableness, for a shifting from mood to mood on the part of the Divine would be a violation of unity. Here, again, the main aim of the doctrine has been moral. Men have been trying to free themselves from whim or caprice in the Divine. I do not think it would be beside the mark to affirm that one of the desperate burdens of heathenism is the belief in capricious gods so common in heathenism. I do not lose sight of the idea of fate, of inescapable destiny, which rules in some religions, but I think nevertheless that something of the affliction of heathenism, especially in the life of the common worshipers, is the need of propitiating gods and the difficulty of knowing when the god is satisfied and how long he will remain satisfied. May I repeat once more that the objection of many serious-minded persons to a belief in a personal God is their inability to think of personality apart from changefulness suggestive of whim or mood. There is no call for attempting to deny this

weakness of personality in human beings. Our feelings rise and fall like tides without the regularity of tides, and without any law which we can frame. We know that we are dependent on physical conditions, on social contacts, on the manifoldness of factors which may instantaneously throw us out of one temper of mind and into another, not to the harm of our moral principles indeed, but of the firmness with which we hold those principles. So that many feel that an impersonal Divinity would be better as a basis for unchanging moral values than a personal Divinity.

Once yield to the impulse to seek a basis for moral steadiness in impersonalism and we come forthwith to outright wreck. We are moving in the domain of belief when we avowedly are seeking the best idea of God for our moral satisfaction. Impersonalism is not safe. The moral values have the right of way, to be sure, but impersonalism destroys them outright. These values are in peril, on the other side, from some philosophical doctrines concerning time which at first glance may seem to afford us relief as to moral unchangeableness. Some philosophers tell us that there is no change in God—that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, that change means nothing to him. Even for ourselves change

is not the real, but is woven through with illusion. I once heard a distinguished teacher of metaphysical idealism remark that in idealism time is merely a mental form, and that, since it has no substantial reality, our puzzled bewilderments as to its meaning themselves have no meaning.

All this sounds easy but it is the blankest answer of all. Our lives know change; in fact, with us the unchanging fact is change. An unchanging world, in the philosophic sense, would be one which we should have to enter by the most detached kind of reasoning—a reasoning indeed detached from every pulsing of experience we have ever known. We can think a timeless world—or, rather, we can utter the words—but we cannot imagine such a world. If we are to conceive of a God who has placed us in a universe in which time means everything to us and nothing to himself, we have in that conception itself a moral difficulty of no scant proportions. No, there is no vast help for moral reflection in a philosophical doctrine that puts the divine and the human so far apart that there is no bridging the distance except by saying the human experience is illusion and the divine experience real. Whence did all this illusion come? It is of the very make of the human mind. If Chris-

tian morality moves on the avowal that man is made in the image of God, we arrive at the foot of a blind alley when we accept a philosophic doctrine that makes change touch everything in man's life and nothing in God's life.

Here, again, we have to remind ourselves that if we are to believe in a Christlike God, the moral qualities are to have the right of way. It is necessary that we see sharply the issues involved. Someone asks what we are to do if philosophy leads us squarely up to an unchanging God in the metaphysical sense. Are we not to follow whithersoever our logic leads us? That all depends. In all theistic speculation we deal with assumptions. There is nothing that gives the hard-and-fast method of the logician of the formal school the authority to lord it over those who wish to make room for other features of human experience than the formally logical. The strictly rational reasoner cannot have everything his own way, except on the assumption that the universe itself is constructed as a strictly logical product of the mechanical type. That is just as truly assumption as the assumption that moral values have place in the universe. We are dealing with problems where strict proof is out of the question. If we are to have a Christlike God at all, then our construction of the

universe must be such as to enthrone Christlike qualities at the center of the universe. If the universe is not to be conceived of in such Christlike terms, we may make any assumptions as to logic we please.

All I plead for is a willingness to look the situation squarely in the face. If we are going to have a Christlike God, let us have one. Let us see where the Christlikeness will lead us. The fact is that this enigma of change and fixity has been with men ever since they started to think at all. From the beginning men have been seeking the unchanging in a hard core of some kind. They would find such a core in matter if matter did not so obviously change. Then they look to some metaphysical fixity.

I am not trying to solve the puzzle in philosophy. I may say, however, that it is not fair to hold against our attempt to provide for a moral God all the metaphysical puzzles about change which have been with men from the beginning, and which tell quite as much against our daily experience as against the theory of the divine. If a thing changes at all, it is not thereafter the same. Where, then, is the fixity unless change is illusion? We see that a soul can know itself as the same, and yet as changing, but how can we work

this out in dealing with the Infinite Soul? The swift answer is to deny either fixity or change, but that gets us nowhere. Logically we are as badly off as with the puzzles of Achilles and the hare, and of Zeno and his flying arrow, to which only half-way solutions have ever been given. So much for trying to be narrowly logical.

I insist that a large part of our trouble comes through giving the metaphysical considerations the first place. We construct a universe in our metaphysics and then afterward introduce moral considerations as best we can. The indubitable foundation stones have to be logical, we say. The mind of man makes logical demands which simply must be heeded, as it seems. Of course, now, everybody concedes that if we are to have a moral universe, we must have a basis for morality; but let us not forget that the basis must be a genuine basis, not a foundation on which it accidentally happens to be possible to build a moral universe. The moral requirements must be primary, if we are to have a Christlike God. It might, indeed, be possible for a thinker to find a place for the Christ-ideal and Christ-spirit after he had provided for everything else to his mind's content, but he could not fairly call his system Christian.

Moral unchangeableness means fixity of moral purpose—quite a different matter from metaphysical fixity. Some will be surprised at my protests at metaphysical fixity, no doubt, or at my statement that such fixity does not imply moral fixity, but the ethical has to run out to its full implications. The divine might itself be in constant change and yet be morally unchangeable. All that would be required would be that all the changes be ruled throughout by a moral purpose which did not change.

If we are to have a God at all, we may just as well have one worth having. Since the time of Kant the outright demonstration of the existence of God has been given up for the assumption of a God whose nature satisfies the demands for our largest and best life. Now if our best demands are moral, the metaphysical must be adjusted to those. There can be no denying that divine experience must be different from human experience, but if we are to have a moral God, the human experience of change must mean something to God; or he must at least know what it means to men. To picture the divine experience as stripped of all the colorful change that belongs to human life and make it one eternal now above change, would deprive the thought of the Divine Life of much of its moral dynamic.

Timeless the life of God may well be, but not in such fashion that time, which is the form of all human experience, is to mean nothing to God. Granted to the idealist that time is nothing but form, the further remark is pertinent that while form may be nothing substantial in itself, it may well be more important than substance. Anything which so colors experience that we cannot for an instant imagine what experience would be without it, is not to be dismissed with the flourish that all this means nothing to God.

The metaphysician may reply that he is himself trying to preserve a moral God, one whose moral life is forever at the full and knows no change. He may say that even if one moral law rules all the activities of the Divine, we do not have a worthy divine object if the Divine Life is subject to ebb and flow, or to a process of becoming either more or less. This point is, indeed, well taken, but it introduces an idea of divine development which may not necessarily belong here. I think we do not indeed get help from the thought of a morally developing God, but a God whose own life is forever at the full might well order the changes in the system in which we live. He would know all the possibilities of the system. Nothing could take him by

surprise. No change might make him more moral after an event than before. We might admit that we cannot tell what such change would mean to him, but that is altogether different from saying that it would mean nothing. We cannot come close to the mind of Jesus, imperfect as are the records of the movements of that mind, without feeling that the changes which men know have mighty meaning for God.

Especially is this true when we are thinking of the moral changes in men's wills. Here are moral facts which have significance for God. If God is indeed unchangeable he must change his activities as men change theirs. The meaning of the paradox is, of course, that if God is Christlike in his morality the fact itself that he is inflexibly moral will cause him to treat a sinful life differently from the way he treats a righteous life. The truth that the church has gone too far in dwelling on the difference between sinners and saints, and has usurped too much authority in assuming to apportion to men their eternal destiny, does not invalidate the conclusion that a moral God must take account of moral situations which call now for one kind of response and now for another. It can be said that the sameness of God calls for differences in his treatment of men.

I crave indulgence as I say again that I do not see any reason for putting the metaphysical difficulties so strongly that we cannot believe in the God of Christ. There is no objection that I know of to saying that God himself must be bound by the laws of his own nature, provided we think of his nature as fundamentally moral. To raise, however, a lot of puzzles as to the nature of time which make God metaphysically unchanging, is to ruin all possibility of thinking of his unchangeableness in moral terms. Change is a fact in the world in which we live. Time may be nothing but the form of that change—but the change and the form itself mean so much to men that they must mean something to God. I do not say that if God is to be a moral being like unto Christ, he must himself enter the stream of change, and be subject to its processes. I mean that he must know what change means for men, and know not just in a formal, intellectual fashion.

At this point some reader, familiar with the current debate about a finite God, asks if we cannot better provide for an unchangeable moral God by going the full length and bringing God himself into change. I am willing to admit that I would sooner do this than to have him outside, looking on the world with

an eternal stare at processes signifying nothing to himself. The difficulty, however, is that when we say that we will bring God into the stream of change we mean—or we are understood to mean—that we will subject him to a law of development which may at the end imply a possibility of his becoming better or worse. That would be a finite God with a vengeance. We do not need to resort to such heroic measures. I do not believe the Christian consciousness will ever be content with any doctrine of God that denies that his moral life is forever at the full. In the light of the attitude of Jesus let us ask ourselves if we can believe in a God who is morally better now than he was ages ago. But is the alternative one of a changelessness which means nothing to human experience, and to which human experience means nothing, as over against a God who is himself developing toward a loftier ideal? It seems to me possible to believe in a God above change, so far as his own moral development is concerned, and who yet knows what change means for men. So long as such a God is revealed in the Christ his changelessness means unalterable faithfulness to that revelation. Even if his own mental seizure of change is in accordance with a psychology of timelessness which we cannot understand,

there is no reason for shutting God off from a knowledge of the way change appears to us. Speaking of the fullness of divine life, I do not see how we could cut that life off from knowing what change is without impoverishing it. The divine moral character's standing forever at the full means that the divine is not subject to becoming either better or worse. It may mean that in an ineffable intuition God grasps all reality past, present, and to come; but ineffable as that timeless grasp may be, it would be a limitation of his life if he did not also know how time and change strike us. To use a most inadequate suggestion, the reader of Shakespeare may know how each of the plays ends, but that does not prevent his enjoying them more deeply with rereading. His knowledge of the plot as a whole does not interfere with the increased enjoyment of the successive readings. There is a double point of view—that of the drama as a whole and that of the successive and shifting scenes. The illustration is most imperfect and raises some questions without answering them, but it does give us a hint. The divine moral life may be forever at the full, but that fullness does not preclude a realization of what change is. The Christian thought implies that the Christ-idea is the center of the divine life.

If the knowledge of God is a timeless intuition, the Christ-ideal is the center of that intuition. If God also enters into a realization of what change means for men, the Christ-ideal is the standard by which all the changes are given their significance.

All of this seems, to one type of student of religion, to bring back upon us absolutism of the most aggravated form. At the moment when the world is impatient of absolutism in metaphysics, this conception of an absolutely Christlike God brings absolutism back by the way of ethics. To this critic the doctrine seems ill-timed also because of the larger, more catholic view of the moral worth of some of the non-Christian systems which is coming into vogue. "Relativity," moreover, is the charmed word. Moral duties spring out of customs differing from place to place and time to time. The doctrine of a morally unchanging God runs counter to all this.

It does nothing of the sort, if I may be pardoned the bluntness. I am not trying to devise a detailed system of ethics for God. I could not, if I would, pick out material for a codified scheme of ethics from the teaching of Jesus. I concede the relativity of moral systems in detail, but I am trying to insist that it is our privilege to believe that the

law of good will, stated in the largest and best terms of which men are capable, holds for God, if we accept the Christ as the revelation of God. It is the God-ward reference of the moral life with which I am concerned. Christian duties, indeed, change. The law of good will among men may call for one attitude and activity at one moment and for another in apparent contradiction at another moment. The revelation of the revelation in Christ may continue indefinitely. Christianity makes the claim that the holy love which Christ taught and lived holds true for God himself. All holiness and all love everywhere may be broken lights of that love. It is no more a sin of absolutism for the theologian to say that the universe cannot escape from holy love than for the scientist to say that it cannot escape from reason.

CHAPTER V

THE DIVINE POWER

For the past few years considerable stress has been laid on the limitations which any careful thinking must put on the divine omnipotence. The problem of evil both in the form of pain and that of sin has been met by the declaration that God cannot help himself. Nobody has ever put the difficulties of reconciling divine benevolence with divine omnipotence more effectively than John Stuart Mill, and the effort of religious thinkers of recent years has been to find some way out of the dilemma. The theists have held fast to the divine benevolence, mostly at the cost of the divine omnipotence, though their surrenders have not been considerable. A good share of discussion of omnipotence throughout the ages of the church's life has been purely verbal. Of course if God is to be at all, he must be something. Much of the debate has attacked omnipotence in the artificial fashion that would insist that being something means not being something else, and then this not being something else is called limitation. All of which is merely words. There is no chance

of advance in theological thinking in manipulating verbalisms. The dictionary is not the best mine of knowledge about God. In one sense definition itself is limitation, but the refusal even to define God lest we in some degree limit his power is no longer looked upon as the path to wisdom.

All seem to agree that the creation of finite wills is, indeed, a limitation of the omnipotence of God. I wish to deal with the problem of the creation of finite wills, especially of human beings, in a separate section. The problem of limitation of divine power is serious enough here, particularly when we think of the number of such beings. For the present, however, I deal with the power manifest in other spheres.

It seems increasingly evident that there is no way of understanding the universe by the exercise of purely intellectual faculties. The only relief is in a Christlike God whom we can trust but whom we cannot now understand. I think the problem is sterner outside than inside the distinctively human sphere. No matter how dark human suffering may be, it is possible to believe that the pain may be utilized for a moral result. This implies personal immortality, of course, but such implication is integral in the Christian system. It is when we ponder over animal pain, and even

over some features of the inorganic realm, that we feel our helplessness. Our only recourse is to carry into our thought of the divine activity a confidence that God's power is used under responsibility. In Christ we have set forth an appeal to such trust. God sees the fall of the sparrow and clothes the grass of the field.

It is a strain to see how limitation of the divine omnipotence aids us much. No doubt certain minds will find comfort in the idea of a God who cannot help us in the presence of stern necessities, but other minds will be worse than bewildered by such a doctrine. Limit the divine power to whatever extent we please, we cannot go far enough to get the relief we seek.

Our realization of immensity of the powers in the control of God, whatever may be the divine nature, grows constantly. We rightly insist that if God is to create at all, he by creation itself takes limitation upon himself, but we no sooner finish saying this than the latest scientific journal informs us in most casual manner of discoveries which vastly increase the range of sentient life on our planet, and of the distances with which we have been accustomed to measure the universe. The commonplace expression which we employ to measure

astronomical time, the "light-year," means nothing to the imagination, for who can grasp such a unit as the distance traveled in a year by light speeding at the rate of over 186,000 miles a second? The distance traveled in a second is itself too long for any adequate grasp by a dweller on the earth. The longest distance we know is the circumference of the earth. When we are told that light can flash seven times around the earth in a second we are at once paralyzed so far as any imaginative grasp of the figures is concerned. All we can do is to calculate the distances, set down the results, and let it go at that. So likewise with time measures for astronomical reckonings, or even for the reckonings of the periods through which life has existed on earth. The figures are beyond us. Thus when a seeker for an explanation of the apparently cruel and meaningless features of the universe is told that the divine omnipotence is limited he is likely to pass by with a shrug of the shoulders. With the physicist teaching him that the tiniest speck of dust in the sunshine is the scene of the interplay of stupendous energies, he is not ready to conceive of the divine power as enough limited to make such limitation an answer to his question. There is enough power left to make a massive problem, if we are to

think of God as personal. Of course if God is not personal, the problem of responsibility can be dismissed forthwith.

In the first chapter I remarked on the difficulty of explaining God's dealings with the universe in such measure as to satisfy the intellectual demands. May I be permitted, even at the peril of seeming repetitious, to delay for a little longer over the inadequacy of the explanation. May I say that the knowledge of the actual steps by which the world processes go forward increases faster than the knowledge of the meanings of those processes. Many a scientist stands in awe at the prevalence of law in the universe, at the definiteness with which consequent follows antecedent. Such scientists speak of the unity and harmony of the physical universe, and declare it easy to believe in mind as the foundation of that universe, especially when the philosophers point out that intelligibility of the universe itself is possible only if the universe is woven throughout according to a thought-pattern. All of which the seeker after an understanding of God may accept, while protesting that it does not bring him within sight of the meanings for which he seeks. Admitting that the universe is grounded in intelligence, can we have any assurance as to the funda-

mental spirit and purpose of that intelligence? Can the intelligence be trusted?

It would seem to be wisdom here to let the critic of theism state his case just as fully as may be. There is no need of making things worse than they are, but, on the other hand, there is only folly in trying to make a better formal argument for the divine benevolence than is warrantable. Scientific processes themselves, or the processes which science describes, do not always move with such show of intelligence as we believers in God declare, or at least imply. To be sure, chemical elements combine according to formulas with finer than hairbreadth exactness, but when the elements combine into the materials of organisms many of the organisms seem to be without significance, as if they came by chance and suffered without purpose. If we could grant to the Darwinians what has been called the arrival of the fit—that is to say, the appearance at the opportune moment of those organisms qualified to survive a particular crisis—we might well say that Darwinism is in accord at least with appearances. Let chemical forces rule with mathematical accuracy down to the last cell of the animal's organism and to the last atom of the plant it eats, the presence of the animals themselves and the food they eat seems to

be haphazard. The animate world looks as if it found its way along by trial and error. Organs may, indeed, have come into existence to meet a need, but they survive the need so long that they finally make toward death and not toward life. In the organic world the rule seems to be the rule-of-thumb. It is no doubt true that design seems to order the portioning out of the inorganic material on earth just so that organic life may become possible. A slight change in the proportions of these elements would have made impossible such forms of life as we know. Professor Henderson's argument as to all this is not to be gainsaid. Once the forms begin to appear, however, the progress takes place, not, indeed, as if there were no intelligence at all, but as if there were an intelligence not sure of itself, or confronted by some intractabilities which it could only slowly overcome. The attempts to make the presence of vestigial survivals, like the appendix in man, strengthen the design argument are worse than nothing, for they argue an intelligence lacking in the ability to put the vestiges away once and for all. In other words, granting that intelligence appears, it is not of the sort that we can understand. It is not of much comfort to us to learn that organisms are the outcomes of the finest

processes conceivable, processes that can only be expressed in formulas which show the workmanship of highest intelligence, if the organisms seem useless or worse than useless, after they appear.

As good a suggestion as any to explain divine benevolence is to say with Leibniz that any finite creation is a part of a system and that the demands of the system have the right of way. For a little distance this is sun-clear. In a circle not every feature can be the center. Some points inevitably must lie off the center. There must be orders of values and grades of importance. So that even omnipotence could not make an intelligible system if everything in that system were of first importance. Just now we are being told of the "web of life" which binds all parts of nature together. If some weaver is actually spinning a web, the pattern of the web seems to be the essential. If every tiny stretch of a spider's web could wake to an organic consciousness and ask as to the meaning of its existence, not much light would dawn on that consciousness out of the information that a mathematical design called the logarithmic spiral binds all the parts of the web into one pattern. The logarithmic spiral, since it requires mind to understand it, no

doubt requires mind to explain its existence; but if the threads of that spiral were endowed with sentient consciousness, they might, indeed, ask what light the logarithm throws on the possible or actual pains of their individual existence.

The lot of the individual is most baffling in any arguments which lay stress on system. I have said that I shall treat of human individuals later. There may be question as to how far a sentient creature without self-consciousness can be called an individual, but such sentient creatures do feel, or all signs are void of sense. They may, indeed, not suffer as they seem, since they presumably possess little or no imagination, but to all appearances they suffer. The suffering of the system is in these separate centers. Nothing in the general requirement that in a system some elements must be secondary to others affords the slightest clue to the meaning of animal pain as we see it. The mere placing of one feature of a system as subordinate to some other might, indeed, hurt that feature's pride, but we are talking of suffering much more substantial than the hurt of pride. No, this problem of animal suffering, seen in its extent in space and time, is the most potent single objection to the doctrine of a benevolent God. As men become themselves more and

more sensitive to pain anywhere, the mystery becomes more serious. No bright light shines on it after all the centuries of speculation. There is scant relief except in trust in the God revealed in Christ.

The questions raised by the apparent meaninglessness of the inanimate universe are not so seriously acute as those having to do with pain, but they are not to be dismissed lightly. The older notion that the universe centers around man, for all its value, is slippery, in view of the increase of our knowledge. Granted that just this type of universe is the best conceivable for starting a race like ours, and granted that this may be part of the explanation of the universe, we cannot claim that we have here a full explanation. Nothing in the universe so stretches the thought and the imagination of the human intellect as the realm of the stars. The mind which can weigh the distant suns is truly of more consequence than the suns themselves. What a tax upon our belief it would be, however, to try to accept the doctrine that light travels to us through thousands of "light-years" just to give our minds a chance to measure it and to read its story of the constitution of far-off stars! The incredible size of the universe does make a mystery of high order.

Now, someone avers that since these features of the universe are manifestly beyond our minds, why should we raise question about them at all? They are God's business and not ours. Let us stick to our own business. The advice is from one angle of view sound enough, or sound enough advice from any point of view except the Christian, for the Christian is allowed to believe in a God of moral responsibility throughout all the realm of his activity. If this means anything, it means God's final accountability to all moral intelligence everywhere—intelligence, that is, able to understand.

This seems to take back in one sentence what has just been given in another, for faced with the dark features of the universe, men are not able to understand. I do not think I am guilty of self-contradiction. If the reason for our not understanding is that we lack at present the requisite data, and the requisite mental power, the answer to our inquiries is simply that we must wait. Just at present the doctrine of relativity as set forth by Einstein and his followers is at once important and difficult to comprehend. What would the demand of the bumptious student amount to that the relativity theory be forthwith explained to him? From one angle the

theory is the business only of those who have faculties and training adequate to doing business with it, which is altogether different, however, from saying that the theory is none of our business. It is, or can legitimately be, the business of anyone who will pay the costs of mastering it. Obviously, the pain and apparent aimlessness in the universe are none of our business, in any fashion that warrants our clamoring for explanations forthwith, and railing against a universe which does not carry its own explanations on its face. What if the explanations are there all the time, the root difficulty being that we cannot read them? It may be that injunctions to reverence before the universe are overdone. It may be that it would be better if we had less reverence for some phases of the universe, but irreverence is often a mark of intellectual incapacity—or at least of impatience.

Now, if we believe in a Christlike God we open the doors for patience. If God is Christian, he is Christian throughout. There are no spaces into which he withdraws to act or live just as he pleases, using the expression for what it suggests in daily conversation. It may well be that what in the universe seems to us futile has no meaning connected with men's notions of usefulness. It may be that

the apparently blank reaches are foils or backgrounds for expressions of divine mood and idea, good on their own account—good, too, for us when we get to the vantage-ground where we can understand them. It may be that a seizure of the lordliness of the universe as a whole is impossible from any such little corner of it as ours; still, the notion of a God endlessly weaving and unweaving, or acting merely out of caprice or whim, or sacrificing sentient organisms to the good of a scheme or "web," is not consonant with the idea of God, or the feeling about God, we get through devotion to the mind and spirit of Jesus. We cannot prove the validity of the teaching of Jesus, but in the light of that teaching we stubbornly avow that irresponsibility in the Divine will not do. We shall have more to say later about the union of the concepts of power and moral responsibility when we deal with God as the ruler of men. Suffice it to remark here that this union is one of the fruitful ethical gains of the centuries. The union was first definitely wrought out in the field of human relationships. After ages of revolutions and bloodshed men recognized that a ruler's power over his subjects must be exercised under a bond of trusteeship. The notion that a king could do as he pleased with his

subjects was early attacked. The victory here is fairly sure. Next came the doctrine that the personal possession of social power of any kind can be justified only by the degree of moral responsibility with which the power is wielded. The implications of this dynamic idea are now being hammered out in the industrial realm in particular. Finally, we are beginning to hear that the possession of power of any sort, even of native personal endowment, involves, or demands, a heavy moral responsibility in the employment of that power.

The critic calls a halt. This may be true enough, he admits, as far as a human society is involved, but we are now arguing about God himself. We have admitted that phases of the divine doing in the physical realm are now beyond us. They seem so far beyond us that we cannot make anything of them. Maybe we can never make anything of them. Possibly there is no intelligence outside of God himself who can make anything of them. Conceivably there may be movements of physical forces whose mathematics no mind, except the Divine Mind, can grasp, or whose purpose no wisdom, except that of God himself, can ever fathom. What does moral responsibility mean in such case? To whom,

in such imagined situation, would God be responsible?

I have put the protest thus to bring out an assumption that too often lurks in the ordinary thinking about God, namely, that responsibility is wholly a relation between persons. Commonly this is true. Our existence is so made up of contacts with our fellows that the demand of moral responsibility is about exhausted in those contacts. Even we, however, speak of loyalty to what we call our ideals, or our own best selves. We desire to be true to ourselves under all circumstances. We say that, even if one were cast alone on a desert island, it would be one's duty to remember one's manhood and not to sink toward brutehood. Now, we are certainly not trying to fancy God as cast on a desert island, but we are trying to suggest that in the divine life pre-eminently the responsibility is to the divine nature itself. Responsibility to others could for God mean little apart from responsibility to his own nature. We are always hearing about mysteries in the divine nature which might conceivably explain this or that. Whatever the mysteries, they cannot be out of line with the highest Christlikeness.

In interpreting God thus according to Christ we must not imagine that our own piecemeal

codes are the standard. All we can ask is that in those phases of activity which we cannot understand, God acts not out of wantonness or sportiveness but out of a nature rational and moral throughout. If the final word about God is Christ, we are content, even if we know ages will pass before we can understand.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

The problem of the divine knowledge, like that of divine power, has supplied material for debate since men first began to speak of God. The discussion has usually turned around the enigma as to divine foreknowledge of what a free being may do. In these later days our moral sense is demanding more and more that a chance for real freedom be granted to men, no matter what inroads such freedom may make on divine omniscience, though divine knowledge of what a free will may do has never yet been proved a contradiction.

Here I wish to look at some of the underlying puzzles which have to do with divine knowing in general. Those who will not concede personality to the Divine of course rule out knowledge in any humanly intelligible sense. Again, a certain type of mind seems to be in hopeless funk over the infinity of combinations of factors conceivably always present to the divine intelligence. Such intelligence would always have present the actual combination of factors, but what would hinder thinking also of the other possible combina-

tions, until consciousness became smothered under the load? Why, further, should intelligence have chosen just the combination we see and no others? A powerfully intellectual acquaintance of mine was once sick and in his illness went into a half-delirium, in which he nearly drove himself to madness counting the various objects in the room, and making all sorts of combinations among the squares and cubes of the numbers. Just so some intellectualists seem to fancy that God must be in a perpetual inanity because of the infinity of possibilities always before him.

If a man is bound to conceive of the divine thinking in this fashion, I suppose there is no help for him, except in ceasing thinking altogether till he rights himself into mental seriousness and balance, for all the above is verbal and artificial. The thinker is abstracting from the actual to enter into a circle of logic-chopping and word-spinning. A Christian idea of God provides a moral center—makes the divine will fundamental. All this fine-webbed stuff about possibilities is abstraction from an actual doing which is followed because it is ethically best. We repeat over and over again that while it is impossible to separate thinking and feeling and doing in any personality—divine or otherwise—the essential is to

decide which we are to put first in order of value. The Christian doctrine of God puts moral doing first. Often as I restate this I am sure that it will not command the assent of some teachers avowedly Christian, for to some there seems need of a stronger foundation for the divine than moral purpose. They crave a logical basis on which the ethical can rest. Then, stepping about among these logical cornerstones, the overrational get to thinking solely of logic, and after a season ethics seem unsubstantial to them. Nothing will avail against this tendency except steeping oneself in ethical seriousness like that of Jesus, for the malady is a species of intellectual frivolity, seriously though the frivolity may take itself. It all resembles that old schoolboy jibe that spelling is more important than the Bible, for if there were no spelling there could be no Bible. Of course no logic will compel a thinker to accept a Christlike God. If one wishes a logic-chopping God, there is no insuperable logical objection. If one, however, is to accept a Christlike God, he may as well make the most of his belief, and trust that even the divine knowledge bases itself in moral solidity.

It is not quite fair to raise all manner of quibbles as to the manner of divine thinking,

when these same quibbles tell just as pertinently against human thinking. We do think, in spite of the alleged contradictions in thinking; nor is it fair to carry into our conception of the Divine all the conceivable and inconceivable weariness and strain with which we should imagine ourselves embarrassed if we were put in charge of the universe. For example, when we speak of knowledge as arising out of moral doing we cannot help suggesting strain toward an ideal, and of lapse again and again to levels far below the ideal. We then fall away in sheer weariness from grasp on a moral intelligence forever at the full which sees always with faultless discernment. At the back of our minds is this craving for something solid, or for something impersonal which goes by itself. When we begin to reach about for that something, however, we experience just as much perplexity as before.

Just a word further about the elusiveness of the divine as a steady, full, moral will. When we reflect upon the divine intelligence as carrying forward the ongoing universe—let us say, the universe of stars and suns—we are prone to conceive of the process as through distinct and separate acts of will, because such sharply outlined decisive acts are our methods of willing. When we think of

God's volitions we imagine myriads of such isolated decisions. Naturally enough, our imaginations soon break down, and then we conclude that personal will is inadequate to such a task as this. If it will help the imagination any, why not take a hint from our moral habits acquired as the deposits of our successive moral acts until they have become the most substantial strata of our nature? A man's nature is never more completely moral than when it has attained to this fixity. A man's intelligence is not always consciously and deliberately debating whether to act one way or another. The more quickly mind seizes upon essential truth—without plodding through all the steps of formal reasoning—the more logical it is. Instead of picturing God as always solving equations for the propulsions of stars and suns and planets, why not consider him as acting in such complete conformity with what intelligence calls for that our manufactured equations are merely the slow and halting stages by which inferior intelligence reads God's thought after him? God acts in the full light of wisdom—his act the full expression of intelligence, his act a unified whole. Then our duller minds trace out the unity, discover how the parts fit into system, partially solve the equations which so soon run

out beyond our mathematical instruments. Likewise with the activity of God from the moral point of view. I say, "from the moral point of view" simply to indicate that we can repeat all this over again from the moral angle. Any such term as "habit" is crudely erroneous as applied to God, for it suggests fixity after struggle, but it does hint at a steadiness of doing which meets the yearning of human weariness for something that seems to go of itself, without innumerable separate deeds of decision. What we think of as half-conscious, or subconscious, processes in ourselves because they go forward without our conscious effort, may give an inkling of a divine life which is not, indeed, half-conscious or subconscious, but which goes forward without strain. Or, at the other end of the scale of personal experience, we may all recall moments of rapt insight when we seem to have risen into a world beyond ourselves. If there is a region of subconsciousness, may we not also speak of a region of superconsciousness—at least "super" the usual consciousness? Now, the gleams of sudden insight to which some attain when they rise from the customary levels to something higher have the characteristic of presenting truth—or what seems to be truth—in wholes, the truth standing in its

own right. Moreover, all the familiar processes of reasoning seem at such instants like discarded ladders. We wonder that we ever had any use for them. Since such experiences as these are possible to men, why may they not be the best clues at least to an adumbration of the Divine? Instead, then, of our thinking of the moral life of God as a painful and strained clinging fast to an ideal—the difference between the divine and the human being that the divine needs no development and can know no lapse—we should better think of a full life, imagined after the highest moments of insight we ever seize, spontaneously and naturally rich on its own account, every pulsing centered upon an ideal which is moral throughout. Of course the Divine must know himself through and through. There must be no dim corners as in ourselves, or hidden depths out of which evil impulses may well forth. The full knowledge in the Divine must rise out of the full moral life.

Here we may as well mention the old, old debate as to whether God acts in a particular way because that way is right, or is the way right merely because it is the divine act? The customary answer to-day is that God acts in a particular way because that way is right, and yet that the right is itself the expression

of the divine nature. The moral ideal is not something over against God as a standard to which he must conform, but is itself the expression of his nature. This seems somewhat like a mere collocation of words, I know, but it is vastly different from the teachings of the older days as to a divine sovereignty which made deeds right and ideals true just because God did or spoke them. I would say that there is a realm of moral truth which God and men alike must recognize, and to which they must conform, if it did not suggest that God, like men, is involved in a moral struggle.

Why should we feel any more difficulty in grasping God's relation to a moral system than in grasping his relation to an intellectual system? We do not ask whether truth is truth because God utters it, or whether it is something with rights on its own account! Whatever truth is, we expect God to conform to it, though we have no objection to the claim that it is the expression of his own nature. Even those who deny the existence of God will concede that if there were to be a God he would have to be one of whose nature truth would be an expression. Possibly the admitted relativity of moral codes causes some to draw back from making moral truth the expression of a divine nature. This relativity,

however, touches all truth. It may be that the crudeness and stiffness and narrowness of our moral precepts make us shrink from saying much about the moral qualities of God as the center of his life, but similar shortcomings affect all our more intellectual processes and deliverances.

We think, then, of God as moral light in whom there is no darkness at all. This fullness of moral understanding itself implies responsibilities upon a Christlike God. Knowledge is power. The difference in knowledge between God and any finite creature puts God under heavy bonds which, we may believe, he rejoices to assume. It is inconceivable, of course, that the Divine Life be stained by any knowledge of sin, except as the holy can recognize and fight against sin; it is inconceivable also that the Divine should live in any moral darkness, or with any feeling of a divided self. Still, it may be well to recall what was said about the divine knowledge of change as a finite creature experiences change. If the Divine, which we think of as changeless, cannot in any form realize what change means to finite intelligence, then the Divine knows little about the finite. So likewise with the relation of the Divine to any growing moral life. If the Divine does not have some

realizing insight as to what moral struggle means to the one struggling, then the Divine knows all too little about the moral life of the finite. Especially in passing judgment upon the finite can we believe that the Divine will act under a trusteeship, so to speak, because of the difference between the Infinite's full knowledge and the finite's partial knowledge —or no knowledge at all. If we worship a God in terms of Christ, we have less difficulty here.

Just a word further as to the source of the divine knowledge about the goodness in a finite life. First of all, let us take fair account of such finite goodness. Was it not Horace Bushnell who once preached on some glories peculiar to men which perhaps might rank high as compared even with the divine glories? As I recall, Bushnell made moral development itself a delight worthy to be compared to the ineffableness of God's eternal fullness. It almost seemed as if Bushnell preferred such human development to a divine changelessness. A further instance of the glory of finite existence might be found in the spectacle of that goodness which stands for truth when the appearances seem all against truth. In the Divine there is completion and harmony. In the finite there is lack and discord, yet in

this region of the half-light, or of no light, there are finite wills which stand for righteousness without ever attaining to a glimpse of harmony, or without anything which can be called a reward of righteousness. Perhaps there is no glory of the finite mightier than this of pursuing truth and right for their own sakes, though the glory fails of recognition because it is so common.

Now, the obligation is accepted by a Christ-like God to note and appreciate finite goodness. How is his appreciation possible? By the exercise of irresistible metaphysical omniscience? Such omniscience, if it were not itself moral, could not attain to an appreciation of the moral even in a finite creature. For such appreciative knowledge requires more than a purely intellectual faculty. I have heard religious teachers speak of the devil as if he were omniscient. In fact, I can now point to teachers who make the devil's knowledge equal to God's. Just for the sake of the argument let us assume a devil, or any Satanic intelligence, with a range of knowledge about equal to that with which popular religions endow him. Necessarily such a Satanic intelligence could not know everything. It might grasp at a wide range of objective facts. It might seize all the mathematical principles of

the material universe; it might, in short, know everything knowable from the outside. It could not, however, know from the inside that universe of fine wisdom which can only be seized by moral sympathy. Such a Satanic intelligence might behold everything a noble character might do, and yet might miss the inner meaning altogether. All that vast knowledge which comes out of loyalty to a lofty ideal, all that exquisite understanding which comes out of kinship with moral souls, would be closed to a Satan.

If we are overwhelmed at the contemplation of divine omniscience—and God's knowledge is virtually that even if we make exception of free acts of finite creatures—we may shift to another center by speaking of the divine insight. A wonderful touch in the parable of the prodigal son is that story of the father's vision which caught the significance of the son's return while the son was yet a long way off. It was not an unusually sharp eyesight which enabled the father thus to recognize the son, but the fatherly spirit back of the eye. In the passages where Jesus speaks of the Father's knowledge—though he is, indeed, not discussing metaphysical omniscience—there seems to be more of hint of kindliness and sympathy than of power of intellectual irre-

sistibility in itself. The reference to the sparrow's fall is not intended to show the grasp of the Divine Mind on detail but to reveal the spirit of the Father of all. By the time Jesus appeared on the world's stage the conception as to the reach of God's knowledge had been so well worked out as simply to be assumed. What Jesus added was interpretation of the divine knowledge as sympathetic insight.

Does not our exposition carry us too far? If the divine knowledge is based, so to speak, on sympathetic insight, does not such insight preclude a divine knowledge of evil? Of course it does, in any sympathetic experience. The divine God of the Christ knows more about some aspects of evil than any other intelligence. He knows more of its cost. Evil means more distress to him than to anyone else. Still, he cannot know evil in the experience of friendly response to evil. He can have sympathy for the soul of low ideals, but not sympathy with that soul. If this is a limitation of the omniscience, let it be so. The approach to God through Christ is not concerned with the preservation of formal omniscience at the cost of moral worth.

If, then, God is like Christ, at least three considerations must shape our reasonings

about the divine knowledge. The knowledge, like the power of which it is a form, is held under a heavy responsibility, which God freely carries. It is revolting to contemplate immeasurable knowledge without immeasurable responsibility. Secondly, the knowledge must be linked with moral doing. Jesus said that he that doeth the divine will shall come to a knowledge of the truth. While this applies chiefly to men as learners it must have some meaning for God. The divine knowledge must be a mirroring of the divine doing, and the divine doing must be in response to the divine knowledge. In God the ideal is made real, God's own choice forever ratifying the ideal and setting it forth into expression. Finally, in any dealings with finite intelligences, God's approach to men can be conceived of not as through an overpowering intellectual omniscience, but as through moral insight. Sympathetic understanding is the diviner term. Omniscience in dealing with souls seems cold if we believe in God as like unto Christ.

CHAPTER VII

THE DIVINE OMNIPRESENCE

The divine omnipresence probably causes less mental confusion to-day than formerly when being had not been so closely identified with activity. We now see that the only way being can be at all is to act. Complete passivity is at bottom what we mean by non-being. So that a thing is fundamentally wherever it can act. Most of our difficulties about omnipresence have come out of conceptions limited to our own physical organisms. We identify our own personal life with one part of a physical body and then wonder how our organism could be everywhere at one and the same time.

On the metaphysical side, I repeat, omnipresence is not so bewildering as it once was, and yet, the conception of a Force acting everywhere throughout the universe introduces many perplexities to us. We have seen reasons for believing that in many of their phases the activities of the universe do not have direct significance for men. My body is no doubt an item of the physical mass of the universe. That mass may be shifting its

center more or less, all the time I am in the mass whirling through space at enormous speed. I am in one spot of the universe in January and in a far other spot in June. Infinitesimal though my own organism may be, it is of a system which is being readjusted constantly according to the demands of equations which the highest mathematics cannot grasp. I certainly cannot grasp the science which controls my body. I do not know how to give more than a rough description of the gravitation which incessantly plays upon my body in relation to other bodies, and which helps relate the parts of my body to each other. It does not help me much to interpret the divine omnipresence in terms of the operation of such forces. My body itself may be the seat of microscopic universes. If we are to believe the modern theories as to the construction of atoms, our bodies may be composed of throbbing systems which have a use in themselves altogether apart from their uses to us. No, it is not a large aid just to think of divine forces as playing around us, except as we believe in the friendly nature of the Source of the forces. It is not enough for us to believe that these forces will not do us harm. There are thinkers who conceive of the universe as so friendly to us that it will

do us no vast harm. There is pain, to be sure, and death, but there is enough of joy in living to make life worth while. This, however, is not what the Christian intends by the nearness of God. The mere fact that the power is of God is not enough. We should not feel much at home in a universe where the forces might constantly impinge upon us indeed, but where they might be mostly indifferent to us.

I think we take a step forward in adjusting ourselves when we think of the divine nearness not only in terms of doing and knowing but also in terms of feeling. When I wish to speak of my nearness to my own body I do, indeed, think of my power to make a muscle move with practical instantaneousness, though the scientist's psychological tests might show me the instantaneousness as only "practical." I get a livelier notion of my relation to my body when I think in terms of feeling. I am most certainly wherever I can act, but I am more keenly and vividly wherever I can feel. It seems to me that I am closest to the spots I can feel most keenly. This is true both for pleasure and for pain. Lack of sensitiveness means lack of presence of myself at the inert or dead spot. I say of a numb spot that it feels outside of me, or apart from me, or as if it belonged to someone else.

As it is with physical sensitiveness so also is it with spiritual sensitiveness. Let us waive the question just now as to the physiological basis for feelings of every kind and consider those phases of sensitiveness which we do not ordinarily assign to a physical base—sympathy for the joy or sorrow of others, appreciations of excellences in which the mind acts so quietly that we think not of an effort of thought or will but of these as set to registering instantaneously by the delicate shades of feeling. Admittedly, all these phases of mental activity are united in reality, but at any one instant knowing, or willing, or feeling seems to predominate. For the moment I am thinking of the quality of instantaneousness, or alertness, or power of immediate reaction. As a rather crude illustration we may imagine a group of telegraph operators relaying a message. The wires themselves may speed the message with a quickness which is for us instantaneous, but suppose one of the operators is slow. It may be possible to translate his inertness or deadness into the minutes which it would take the message itself to travel over the wires to a much greater distance, if it were not for the psychological sluggishness.

Now, immediacy of response seems to me of most aid as a clue to the divine omnipresence.

In the chapter on immanence this problem will come up again from a slightly different base, for by immanence we ordinarily mean particularly the divine omnipresence. No discussion of this theme can be satisfactory, but it does seem to me that in facing the omnipresence of God the imagination gets a little more help if we make the most of the hints from sensitiveness.

Whatever our categories, however, the essential for us is the character of the omnipresent Mind. So far as our relation to God goes we desire to know if he is paying attention to us. The sacrificial rites of religions in all ages have, in the last analysis, aimed at least partly to attract the attention of the being conceived of as divine. Elijah's taunting of the priests of Baal is significant here. Many features of the story of the contest of Elijah with the priests of Baal may not be historical in detail, but the taunts against the heathen priests precisely describe one characteristic of much, perhaps most, heathenism, namely, the inattentiveness, or lack of sensitiveness of the gods toward men except as the interests of the gods are unusually aroused. Elijah called out that the god of the Baal-worshipers was asleep or off on a journey. The frantic shoutings of the priests were aimed at waking the god,

or arousing him out of sluggishness, or of diverting his attention from something on which he might for the moment be engaged. Now we might, so far as the physical forces of the universe are concerned, think of them as propelled forward by the power of a Baal, but of what value would be the forces working around us if we could not attract the attention of the controller of the forces? No, it will not help us much to believe in a God whose attention wanders, or whose wits go wool-gathering. The pressure of his attention upon our fate and life is what we desire.

It may be that I am wandering a little from the essential significance of the doctrine of the divine omnipresence. The modern putting of immanence lays stress on the divine nearness. Historically at least, the conception of divine omnipresence grew out of the realization of an enlarging world, and sought to find God out on the frontiers of that enlarging universe. No matter where the Hebrews first got a start in worshiping their God, they rendered vast, indispensable service in always taking their Deity with them, not, as some students would tell us, carrying him along in a box, but in realizing that their God had power wherever they might be. I have no desire to enter a field of controverted criticism, but let us assume

that the God of Israel was originally the Deity of the Kenites, with special habitation at Sinai. A first stupendous lesson was that this Kenite Deity had power in Egypt, then in the wilderness, then in Palestine, then against Philistines, Assyrians, and Babylonians, and finally over all the earth and heavens. The Hebrews' conviction of the presence of their God kept pace with their growing knowledge of the world. They could not out-travel their God. They could not get ahead of him or beyond him.

This same adjustment of the presence of God to the demands of our ever-enlarging world has been one of the continuous triumphs of the Christian church. If we wish to realize how complete the victory, let us consider one or two such adjustments. I mention first one which I do not remember ever hearing considered in this connection—the matter-of-factness of the assumption of the great explorers from the time of Columbus on that the lands into which they pressed were the domain of the God of Christianity, and that their business was to convert the inhabitants of those lands to Christianity. The world of Columbus before he sailed was not large. Columbus believed in the sphericity of the earth, but if he had known how far he would actually have to

travel on his first voyage, he would probably not have weighed anchor. He pushed so far that some of his sailors, indeed, thought God had deserted them, but their despair was a mood and not a conviction. The conviction was that God was the Lord of the new lands. Now, I know this will seem commonplace, but that is because the everywhereness of God is trite with us. The discoveries of Columbus were scarcely more than two thousand years later than the time when men believed in separate gods, in localized deities. The Christian nations at the close of the fifteenth century were not large, and heathenism pressed in closely upon their borders. In spite of all this the explorers and conquerors assumed the everywhereness of God as naturally as they assumed the sea and the land. The word of one explorer in a storm when it seemed that his ships must sink, that Heaven was as near from the waves of that strange sea as from England, is as significant as giving a glimpse of the mind of the age as of the spirit of a heroic individual. The commonplaceness of the conception to-day is itself a tribute to the spiritual energy of those who enforced the conception till it became commonplace. Two thousand years earlier the assumption that the gods of the peoples to whom the explorers

came were real in their own domains would have been altogether natural and easy.

Time and again have thinkers emphasized the marvel of the adjustment of Christianity to the Copernican theory. I have in previous pages urged that the increase of knowledge of our material world is also an increase of ignorance, and that the wider the knowledge the heavier the strain on faith. I do not wish to retract anything thus urged, but I here note that the scientific teaching concerning some forces that rule everywhere is an aid to the doctrine that God works everywhere. The metaphysical doctrine is helped by scientific utterance, though the ethical doctrine is still a call for faith. It is a positive help to accept the discovery first forcefully set forth by Galileo, namely, that there is an essential uniformity in nature's processes. No matter how far the starry spaces may extend, they are ruled by the same laws as rule our planet. Sir Charles Lyell made us even more at home in the world when he showed that the forces now shaping the earth—rainfall, heat and cold—are the same as have been shaping the earth from the beginning. After a fashion this stripped the old geologic days of their strangeness. Likewise the spectroscope indicates that stars are composed of materials

to be found on earth, that the heavenly bodies —some of them—are now what the earth once was, that changes are taking place in them according to laws with which we are familiar. The mathematicians tell us of the significance of geometry and trigonometry and calculus for the movements of the heavenly spheres. The physicist speaks of a gravitation which works everywhere, and the followers of Einstein seek to combine space, time, and gravitation into one comprehensive formula valid throughout the universe.

Now, whatever may be established by such conceptions some things are disestablished. All notion of a broken-up, decentralized universe is gone. The universe is one. The old materialism which conceived of matter as dead mass, or as inert lumps, called atoms, is gone. Forces are now at the center of the stage. Moreover, it is increasingly hard for matter conceived of as blind force to hold its sway. The energies work in ways that can be grasped only by the highest mathematics. If so much mind is required to read off the processes of the universe, it does not seem far-fetched to assume that the universe is the expression of mind. Even the considerations which are summoned to reduce mind to insignificance end by exalting mind. If mind is insignificant as compared with matter, mind has found

itself out. If mind is just the outcome of the whirl of impersonal powers, mind has discovered that. If mind is to be ruled out of the universe, the decree must go forth in the name of mind—and there we are, with mind back in the throne by the very decree that banishes mind.

Nevertheless, the everywhereness of God, to which modern science lends some aid, is of scant comfort, after all, unless we can think of God in terms of Christ. I admit that there might be joys in a life lived out before indifferent gods, but a human race which is more and more taking mind as the clue to the universe, will ask more and more insistently as to the nature of that Mind. If the ethical aspects are the noblest features of mind as we see it, the only way we can keep our balance is to hold to the Mind of the universe as moving according to the highest principles we can conceive. The believer in the God of Christ finds in the progressive intensification of his understanding of the moral spirit of Christ a balance to the extension of our knowledge of the range of intellectual principles throughout the universe. It is a strange tendency that prevents some philosophers from balance in their view of the universe. At the same instant that they insist upon the everywhereness of laws which admittedly imply mind,

they become more skeptical as to the cosmic significance of righteousness.

I suppose it is fair to meet my query by saying that the recognition of mind means only that laws explain more and more how events are brought about. We behold mathematics ruling throughout the quantitative universe. There is, indeed, an everywhereness of mathematics, but we cannot see what the mathematical movements are for. The skeptic avows that he does not deny mind by flying in face of the actual mathematical processes, but that he resents anyone's telling him what the processes are for. They may be expressions of some lofty intelligence glorying in the manifestations on their own account, or they may be purposeful in some practical manner, or they may have no purpose at all. Our knowledge, in other words, has to do just with how things hang together, or with steps by which events follow one another. How things happen we to a measure know. Why they happen we do not know. What the forces are we do not know, even if we admit that they are expressions of Mind. For knowledge of Mind is of no surpassing value till we know the purpose and spirit of the Mind. So the skeptic protests. Perhaps we can best consider what he says by discussing immanence.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DIVINE IMMANENCE

The distinction between omnipresence and immanence may seem too closely drawn, but there are some suggestions which cluster more naturally about the one term than the other. The skeptic mentioned in the preceding chapter is just in his contention that the theist takes it all too easy in resting his argument as soon as he hears the widespread concession that law and mind are expressed everywhere. God, indeed, may be everywhere, but what is he doing everywhere, or anywhere? One law may rule everywhere, but is there one purpose everywhere? Who knows but the law may supply a stage on which no purpose rules whatever, or on which puppets are jerked about by wires, all the time under the illusion that they are free?

Let us admit again that omnipresence and immanence start a swarm of detailed problems that they do not specifically solve. The advantages of the doctrine of immanence are that with it we can think of all-pervading law, which is a help even when we do not know what the law is for, that we do away with the notion of a Deity who started the world like

a wound-up toy and then left it to run, or run down, of itself; that we conceive of God as free from barriers which he must break through in order to get to the world in which we live. The old notion of nature as a manufactured contrivance which even the Deity had to break into, and whose laws he had to set aside if he reached us at all, was a heavy load upon mind and heart and will. Relief from all this is distinct advance and clear gain, though it is astonishing, by the way, to note the traces of deism which still abound not only in common thought but also in some philosophical exposition which disavows deism.

Still, this relief is not the whole story, by any means. God is brought near in immanence; but if we are to hold to immanence, we must face all the implications of the conception. We must go the whole way. God is in everything, with the reservation that he is not himself willing the choices of free men. In popular expositions of the doctrine God is in the blue skies and the green grass and the pretty birds. But he is also in everything else. "Tiger, Tiger, burning bright" presents a theological problem which we can escape only by deliberately turning away from the jungle. If the poet draws comfort out of the beauty which the immanent God is now and

here spreading out before him, the cynic can in his turn point to facts ugly and even hideous. The doctrine of divine immanence is, I repeat, a long step ahead, but we may as well recognize its limitations. It brings God immediately near in something resembling a physical contact. It puts him in all things alike so far as causal activity is concerned. It also—and this we must not forget—forces on us a new conviction that God is immediately responsible for the features of the world that we see and for those that we do not see. If we can believe in the God of Christ, that is enough. We must reach some focus of belief in any case, or quit thinking about the problem.

I would not, however, leave the impression that the older, more deistic systems were any better off than immanence as regards the divine responsibility. No matter how far away we put God, so far as intermediaries are concerned, we cannot acquit him of responsibility for the stern facts of the universe by the introduction of self-running agencies. A summary deistic procedure is, or used to be, to draw a distinction between God as First Cause and the secondary causes through which he does his work. Just counting "first" and "second" gets us nowhere. "Secondary causes" is a term useful to keep our minds on the

factors themselves without raising back-lying questions, but it does not and never did get at the final responsibility. Secondary causes can do nothing on their own account. So with the attempts to put the fault for the mysteries on laws. All that this can mean is that God made poor tools—or that the tools were made of material that he could not control—or that they slip in his hands! No matter how long a chain reaches from the universe to God, God is not cleared of responsibility by the length of the chain.

Nevertheless, the conviction that God is immanent does bring him nearer to us at least by ridding us of all the clutter of intermediary machinery. Few teachers of immanence get the full help from the doctrine that they could if they would push their reasoning far enough to free themselves of the burden of all-embracing real space, and make the space merely the form under which the immanent energy works. If God is like unto Christ immanence can be pushed out to its implications, and be made a support to faith. If God is as near as immanence brings him, the need for some assurance, at least of faith, as to what he is like is at once apparent. If we are to live at such close quarters with this immanent Power, we are immeasurably helped

if we can believe that the spirit of the Power is like unto the spirit of Christ.

A moment ago I said that, according to the doctrine of immanence, God is causally in all things alike. This is not saying that he is in all things alike so far as meaning is concerned. If he were, there would be no meaning. As soon as we affirm that God is in all things a certain type of theologian forthwith declares that this settles everything. All comes from God—so all our troubles disappear. In fact, a good many of them just begin. If we cannot have distinctions in the utterances of the universe, there is no meaning in the universe. God is in storms and sunshine, tigers and robins, sickness and health alike. Mind means nothing, unless all factors are parts of a plan in which each plays out its function, with some functions more important than others.

If we are to believe in a Christlike God, we must get away from the conception of the divinity of all things alike. If we are to hold to immanence, we must do so as a statement of the everywhereness of God's activity and the oneness of plan that works through that activity. This is important because of the tendency, since the coming of the immanence teaching, to say that God is in Christ and in

all other men, that he is in Christ and also in the blue skies—which, of course, has its measure of truth, but which misses the essential. In painting a landscape there must be a focus, which the artist sometimes calls the eye of the landscape. In a masterpiece of oratory there is a climax; in a drama there is outcome or dénouement; in orchestral music there is a theme; in argument there is a conclusion. Painters, orators, dramatists, musicians, philosophers are, it might be said, in all parts of their work alike. They composed it all, and painted and played and spoke and wrote it all. To say that each creator, however, was "in" the interpretative key, which unlocked the one regnant meaning toward which every detail had been moving, in no different sense from that in which he was "in" a minor detail is absurd. That is to say, if we are to preach God as like unto Christ, we have to maintain that the doctrine of the Divine Presence in everything is not to conflict with that presence of God in those central aspects which lead to intelligibility. In the *Messiah* Handel is present in every note of the oratorio, but we should not say that he is in the drumbeats alone just as he is in the majestic song of the "Hallelujah Chorus." If some hearer should begin to disparage the chorus on the

ground that Handel also wrote the drum-parts, we should declare he was either putting forth commonplace or nonsense.

The believer in a Christlike God beholds in Christ a climax, a theme, a motive, a spirit which gives him God in his deepest nature. In other words, God is in Christ as he is not elsewhere—as revelation of spirit and character. If, now, some objector will have it that God is also in everything else, we have to reply that no doubt he is, but that we are on the search for meanings, and that we do not find meanings in settings of scenes, as we do in the scenes themselves. With a clue to a meaning once in our hands the accessories fall into place, but the accessories themselves do not supply the clue. In Christ we feel that we have arrived at a center. The view outward from a center is altogether different from the view inward from a circumference.

Some one seeks to turn upon us the admissions we have already made as to the vastness of our ignorance, or as to the increasing extent of the unknown out beyond the known. Is it not the height of rashness to affirm that we have in anything—in Christ, or in anyone, or in anything—the central focus of all this universe? We repeat that all we are trying to do is to show what the Christlikeness of

God implies. We are not trying to prove to scientists or philosophers that such a God exists. We avow ourselves again and again as unable to deduce God from any data within our reach. We aver that a God of any kind must be seized by faith. All we are doing is to try to unfold the implications of the teaching that in Christ we see God. We insist that there is nothing in the doctrine of the divine immanence to shut us off from seeing God as especially in Christ. A man might conceivably sit by the bank of a river flowing into the sea, or by the edge of a cove into which wash the tides of the sea. By watching ebb and flow he might master the essential laws of the tide without ever looking upon the sea. His knowledge would be admittedly limited. He would know nothing of the thousand-league stretches of the Atlantic and Pacific. He would not be able to tell how high the tide rises at the Bay of Fundy or at Hangchau in China. He would, however, so understand the principles of the tide that wherever he might travel the tide would be intelligible to him. In some respects his little cove might be the best of observation stations, better than the broad expanse of the ocean itself. The scientist never wearies of telling us of Newton's leap from the law of the fall-

ing apple to that of the falling moon. Given all the circumstances, the hint of gravitation was for Newton centrally in the falling apple. Now, these illustrations are inadequate in that they are merely specifications of a law. Christ was more than a specification, so that the other illustrations suggestive of climaxes, and themes of dramas, and reasonings are more pertinent. Still, cove and falling apple do suggest that we are not to allow our minds to be terrorized or bullied by quantitative or mass considerations. Moreover, while we may concede all possible worth to that quantitative realm with which the scientist deals, we must never forget that in Christianity we move among qualities as well. Just what could we mean if we said that we believe in an immanence that puts the divine in all qualities alike? That would be equivalent to saying that God is in all values alike, which could only mean that God is in no values at all.

If we are to accept a doctrine of immanence which leaves us a God like unto Christ, we shall have to admit that God is even in some things for their elimination. Was it not Jonathan Edwards who said that some things show forth the glory of God in being acted upon and destroyed? Of course Edwards would have included souls, who for God's own

glory were thus to be destroyed, and a God who would work in men to destroy them merely "for his own glory" would not be the God of Christ. Still there is a truth in Edwards' words. The perverse or imperfect choices of finite wills might, indeed, make it necessary for God to decree the elimination of features of the universe introduced by evil choices. Or in a progressive advance of the system it might be necessary to work out of and away from features once important but now no longer so.

It is to be always kept in mind that if God is like unto Christ, the universe as we see it may not be altogether the universe which would have been if the divine will could everywhere have ruled. God is, indeed, in all things; but if our philosophies of immanence take unto themselves to declare that, since God is in all things, everything, therefore, is as God would have it, we are in danger of getting out of the perspective and away from the moral balance of Jesus. Here, again, we are not in the region of formal proof, but it is not possible to keep close to the words and spirit of Jesus and believe that the world is just what God would have it be. We need not now talk of a taint or an impairment of the realm of nature caused by a fall of man. All

that is necessary is to recognize the actual moral struggle, and the consequences of the evil or the imperfect for men, and even for the material conditions under which men live. An evil choice is seldom merely an inner spiritual event in its total effect. The closest connection of the human will with the nature outside is through the body which is the organism of the will. That organism is connected with other organisms, and with the other material factors which form a meeting-place for the organisms. Through this web of life the consequences of an evil or mistaken choice may work out into an expression not at all suggestive of divine indwelling, except that the divine life is laboring in all this for elimination and purification and redemption. The redemptive activity of God brings us closest to the mind of Christ. God is working everywhere for redemption among men who have made wrong choices.

Further food for meditation as to the right interpretation of immanence is to be found in a little reflection on the institutions of human society. Suppose we could assume that men everywhere work in society with unselfish purposes. Even so the institutions of society are imperfect. The most radical social agitators to-day insist that it is at least bad

tactics to hold any individual, or set of individuals, responsible for evils arising out of the faulty constitution of society, that we can better spend our time seeking for the reorganization of society. Jesus himself spoke of the most important human institution, the family, as in one stage faulty, the fault due to the ignorance of men. God himself had to overlook the faultiness for the time being—a word of Jesus which, of course, is to be taken as a description of the attitude of divine kindliness. In complete strictness God could not overlook the faultiness of a human social institution, for by his own laws that faultiness had consequences of which he had to take account if he was to deal with the chosen people at all. So with all human institutions. All are imperfect. Now, an interpretation of the divine immanence which would have us believe that because the institutions are divine in origin they are therefore all that God would have them be, is far from any ideal of the God-life which we could call Christlike.

The doctrine of divine immanence, then, is more for faith than for sight, in any case. I say "in any case," for those who accept the modern lazy, hazy notions of the popular puttings cannot actually see any more than the others of us. As soon as they have heard

that God is in all things alike they do not ask as to the different senses in which he may be indwelling, or even as to what indwelling means. They take a causal nearness as sufficient and let it go at that, regardless of the truism that a merely causal nearness settles little. If asked to elaborate on the belief, they talk of those blue skies and green fields and song birds which we mentioned above. That this is better than nothing goes without saying, but the immanence becomes of service only in the hands of the believer that God is in Christ. Once firmly hold of that conception, the believer is willing to look the darkest aspects of the universe in the face. It is noteworthy that Christianity and the Judaism from which it came have always been willing to look squarely at the grimmest of grim facts, with no palliation of the grimness and no glossing it over. The strictest scientist has never shown more willingness to look at things as they are than has the genuine Christian. Only, the Christian has looked at more; or he has looked out of a conviction that the moral nature of the Power working in the most mysterious ways has been Christlike. It is entirely possible, therefore, for the Christian believer to accept the doctrine that God is in all things, and to maintain that he is in

some things differently from the way he is in others, and that we do not know what much around us means, so far as the actual processes are concerned.

Here may be as appropriate a place as any for a word in behalf of genuinely Christian agnosticism. The avowal that God is in a manner in all things may be accompanied by a frank profession of ignorance as to how he is in this or that particular fact. Most witnesses to their belief that God has led them along life's pathway do not go far in their story before creating more doubts than they destroy. I once knew a worthy saint who was never weary of proclaiming that God had so shaped his career as to bring about certain consequences favorable to himself. The supposedly divine guidance had led this one man to a happy outcome through a chain of happenings which necessarily had involved the death of others. Just how these others were favored did not appear. Of course there are crises in life where men justifiably feel that the working out of events shows in especial definiteness the presence of the Divine. I have just been trying to say that if the divine immanence is to be adjusted to a belief in a Christlike God, the adjustment must be on the basis of special nearness which the every-

whereness of the divine causality does not of itself imply. Now at the risk of seeming to withdraw all this it becomes imperative to add that the interpretation of such special nearnesses is dangerous if they depart far from the realm of inner spiritual nearness. It is possible to believe that God is with us in the peculiar intimacy like that which we have in mind when we feel that a friend is with us in our work, or struggle, or sorrow, at the same instant that we admit complete agnosticism as to how the nearness of the Divine is to reveal itself in the outer working of events.

CHAPTER IX

THE DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE

The transcendence of God is often used as if it had one clearly cut meaning, but it too serves different purposes in the hands of different persons. With some it lends itself readily to the thought of God as Christlike. For example, it is at times taken to mean that the range of the divine activities is beyond the comprehension of man. This is admitted by the Christian outright. All that Christianity asks is that in all realms the Christ-spirit rule. Suppose there are millions of worlds like ours which never yet have come swimming within focus of the farthest-reaching telescope. There is nothing in this to make us modify our conception of the character of God. Or suppose that every atom is to a degree a self-contained universe. The physicist thinks that the atoms are like solar systems, with planets of negatively electrified matter revolving around a positive center similar to our sun, that the distances between the electrons are, as compared to the size of the electrons, like distances between the planets of the solar system compared to the size of

the planets. Suppose that every atom is a universe. On a different scale—with a difference which nobody on the electron-planet might recognize—it might be that each of the atoms is the seat of a history of an atom-race of minds. This is fancy, but let fancy have her way for a little. Is there anything in all this to require modification of the nature of God? Not at all. Or suppose there are universes possible in some dimension beyond the three dimensions. Or suppose that there are realms of existence outside of space altogether. Nothing in this necessarily calls for change in our attitude toward God. We are here merely dealing with a God of whom our knowledge grows from more to more. This kind of transcendence is compatible with immanence, in that God is immanent not only in the world we know, but also in all the worlds that transcend ours.

This is not, however, what transcendence always means. In the interpretations, or at least the implications, of some theologians, it implies that there may be as many different moral systems as there are different worlds, and that it is the height of impertinence for us to try to make our moral ideas of God rule for systems other than our own. Let me repeat that John Stuart Mill once found him-

self in a logical corner from which he sought to escape by saying that two and two might make five in some other planet. Only very gritty pragmatists would go that far to-day, though some do indeed make truth just an agreed-upon convention. In the field of moral theory, however, more than a few who would maintain that in another universe our mathematics would have to rule as far as applicable, will have it that we could not for a moment apply our moral conceptions to such a transcendent sphere.

There is confusion here. When we speak of a moral God we do not refer to any detailed code as the expression of God's moral nature. Nothing in our conviction as to the Christlikeness of God will tell us in concrete detail just what God will do in a given situation. Inasmuch as we do not claim to know what the divine Christlikeness calls for in the limited round of our present experience, we are not so bold as to expatiate on what God will do in other spheres beyond our knowledge. In general, however, we are sure of some features of moral character which must be true of the divine nature anywhere, inside or outside of our experience, if the divine is to be Christlike. Wherever a Christlike God acts he must act with good will toward the intelli-

gences there, no matter how different the form of the experience of such intelligences from all others in the universe. The good will, in other words, is absolute for the Divine everywhere. Next, good will demands that the Divine must give those intelligences all the chance of which they are capable, the opportunity being presented in terms of possible Christlikeness of spirit. With these two requirements in hand as the absolute fundamentals, we are then ready to say that just how the requirements are to be met depends upon the divine knowledge of the concrete circumstances, about which no outsider can say anything.

For some reason there are those who will maintain that such talk as the above is the utmost limit in presumption, but is it? Is it any more presumptuous than to affirm that if the Spirit back of the universe is to be a Spirit of Truth, Truth must be the ideal everywhere? The backlying Force may conceivably not be devoted to truth, but if devotion to truth rules, is it not to rule everywhere? To be sure, this would not say one word as to the concrete content of truth, but would not the demands of such an ideal be final? It may be that some restlessness here comes out of our uneasiness at being told too much about God, that is to say, out of a feeling that

it is not altogether reverent to speak so confidently. There is a sound instinct which tells us that, in a degree, God is and should be unknowable. For this instinct we ought to have all respect, but let us glance for a moment at an illustration which can, unhappily, be taken too often from actual life. A man is stricken with a terrible affliction. A spiritual counselor, anxious to console, proceeds to tell the sufferer in detail just why the affliction came. The grief-laden soul may himself be the first to resent such positiveness of utterance as irreverent and impertinent, whereas he would not resent a frank declaration from the counselor that there is no light on the reason for the affliction, at the same time that there is the deepest wisdom in trusting that God even in such blows acts with the spirit of Christ. We admit the havoc wrought by the teachers who have set before us a too-knowable God, but how the interpretation of God as of Christlike spirit sins against reverence we fail to see.

To return for a moment to the man in sorrow. It is, indeed, a sin against a fine reverence to converse glibly with souls in distress as to just why God permits woe, but an error just as grave, from the point of view of Christian experience, is to quote without much under-

standing the passage which tells us that his ways are not as our ways. The man who wrote that line was not preaching the transcendence of which I am speaking. He believed in God as most real in Israel's life—as the shepherd of his people—at the same time that he admitted the mysteriousness of his actual dealings. God's ways are not our ways indeed, but if they are Christ's ways, we can be content. Of course it will always be possible to speak of God as the Unknowable. There will always be an element of knowledge beyond us, because of the impossibility of our overtaking anything infinite, but the spirit of the mind back of that knowledge must be knowable if we are to hold to God as Christlike. It is interesting to observe that many who will not accept Christianity because God is unknowable, end by specifying quite a few items of information about God. It would be instructive to examine the agnostic philosophies from Spencer's day down to our own and note the professed knowledge they set before us about the unknowable.

In a considerable part, I urge, this insistence upon transcendence comes from confusing moral spirit and the concrete details of a moral code. We have heard the departures in conduct of geniuses from our ordinary morality

justified on the ground that it is impossible to tie a genius down to the cramping limits of the accustomed. The genius must break new paths. So too it is folly for us to try to frame any conception of what a divine morality would be, we are told. The most elementary data are too far beyond us. According to the old saying, we are no more fitted to understand the moral constitution of the universe than is an ant to know the constitution of the sun.

Here, again, is confusion, confusion even in the "genius" illustration. Ordinarily, this "great man" argument is brought forward in connection with a genius who has been notable for some self-indulgence—one who has been drunken, or licentious, or untruthful. What to the unsophisticated onlooker would seem to be falling below an established moral standard is proclaimed by the friends of the genius as a rising above the conventions. Now, genius of this type is likely to be overbalanced on one side or another. An acute student has said that the only two geniuses in art of the first order who apparently showed no traces of nervous instability whatever were Leonardo da Vinci and William Shakespeare. It may be wholly proper to pass charitable judgment on an irregular, unbalanced genius in his defiance

of moral laws, but the procedure is not calculated to throw much light on the nature of divinity. When the irregularity of the genius is just a career which ordinary intelligence does not understand, but which is nevertheless followed in a spirit of devotion to truth, we have a problem more like the one we are considering. Moral spirit may call for one course of detailed conduct in one situation and for exactly the reverse in another. Abraham Lincoln was admittedly a great democratic leader, and yet Lincoln at times acted more autocratically than any other ruler of modern times. He transcended all customary precedents and expectations, so far as detailed deeds were concerned, in what seemed violent autocracy, yet his democratic devotion was complete throughout.

We are not quite done with this problem. I once heard a defender of a rigorous theory of atonement avow that he could not make his theory intelligible because of God's transcendence of all human faculties of understanding. He spoke of demands in the divine nature itself that must be satisfied, demands wholly beyond our grasp. It will be recalled also that some of the followers of Dean Mansel, if not Mansel himself, insisted that God could not be seized by human thought, and that

they used this transcendence to attack all attempts at theological reasoning, all attempts possibly except their own. It is true that these Mansellians discoursed of absoluteness rather than of transcendence, but it all came to the same thing in the end. The Absolute was so far above any definition that nobody could intelligibly say anything about him. The Mansellians thus practically joined hands with the Spencerians as to the Unknowableness of God, though both groups found for themselves a good many things to declare. Even a too fluent insistence upon the divine unknowableness is saying quite a little about God.

Some years ago I heard a leader of the extreme fundamentalist party, so called, avow with Boanergic vigor that we must keep silent before the awful transcendence of God. I intend no disrespect toward fundamentalists when I say that this particular leader was using transcendence partly as a shield from criticism which his own theory called forth. He was proclaiming a most amazing theology, and when men asked questions fell back on the divine transcendence. In this instance, however, there was a consideration beyond that of mere avoidance of formal argument. The speaker was a trained scholar, and was not merely trying to avoid meeting difficulties

in intellectual debate. He was a thoroughgoing Calvinist of the old school, with outright emphasis on divine sovereignty. He especially resented discussion that spoke as I have done in these pages about divine responsibility, especially God's responsibility to the man whom he has created. This was, according to the fundamentalist, to fasten man-made moral categories on God with irreverence almost blasphemy. It seemed that, according to this fundamentalist, the world was in a fair way to become Christian up to about one hundred years ago, and had then turned sharply back to paganism, the paganism being, as far as I could make out, the spread of modern scientific and democratic ideas. Of course, if one is to accept the old Calvinism with its doctrine of virtually arbitrary sovereignty for God, one will have to hold fast to conceptions which violate morality and common sense, judging the conceptions by any sort of human standards.

We shall have to admit the dangers of irreverence in frank discussion of the divine attributes, and we must always remind ourselves that in the concrete ongoings of the universe we are as much in the dark as the most thorough doctrine of transcendence would demand. That is different, however, from say-

ing that intellectual and moral obligations cannot bind the divine life. Hegel established the principle that things must come within thought or go out of existence. Likewise all reality must come within the sweep of moral obligation, or a Christlike God must drop from our hold. God's morality is above ours indeed, as his thought and feeling are above ours. Transcending us, however, is not quite the same as transcending morality.

CHAPTER X

THE DIVINE CREATOR

THUS far we have been treating what are usually called the metaphysical attributes of God. We pass now to the attributes which have more definitely to do with men, and we begin with God as Creator of men. In previous chapters I have here and there discussed some phases of this same problem, especially in the paragraphs on power, but as far as possible I have tried to keep the more metaphysical attributes free from the specific considerations raised by the relations of God to men, though this has been possible only to a limited extent.

We have already mentioned more than once the perplexity raised by the power which we usually attribute to God, and the presence of human suffering. To-day there is more or less willingness to limit God's omnipotence so as to relieve him from blame for such suffering, though as far as men are concerned there is always the possibility that the suffering may be utilized for a moral purpose, dark as is the problem before the sufferers themselves at crises of apparently unutterable and needless

agony. There is conceivably an explanation for such suffering which makes it different from that animal suffering which is so dense a mystery. We would better hold fast to the power of a God who can overrule suffering for the sake of ministering to the higher welfare of men than to be overanxious to limit that power.

It is in another quarter—that of human freedom—that we confront the obstacles which arise with belief in divine omnipotence. For we simply must have freedom if there is to be any reason at all in our holding to a belief in the Christian God. On the human side I do not see that present-day theorizing has added much strength to the usual arguments against freedom. When the doctrine of the conservation of energy was newer it was often interpreted to mean that, the sum of energies in the universe being constant, there could be no addition to these physical forces by free will. Now we see more definitely that free will requires only the power to choose among physical forces already existing, the human choice being simply the occasion on which one energy or another, already existing or potential, is directed into one channel or another. If this is conceded, the dreaded bugbear of the relation of free will and the con-

servation of energy reduces to the commonplace conclusion that in making choices our wills have to limit themselves to the forces available for carrying out those choices. The universe is ruled not by law, but by laws. There would be no setting aside law in human choice, but the utilization of one particular law, or set of laws, rather than another. Let a man make the craziest choice imaginable. Let him to all appearances be wildly arbitrary. There is no way that his choice could reflect the arbitrariness, except that he chose a lower law instead of a higher. There is no chance of a human being's escaping the web of law.

I do not intend to review many of the arguments as to freedom; all I wish here is to touch upon those having a bearing on the nature of God himself. I will admit that there is no formal logic by which we can prove that man is free apart from some assumption as to the nature of God. The difficulty we fall into, however, as soon as we begin to declaim in high fashion about proof, is that there is no use talking about proof apart from freedom itself, or apart from recognizing a standard. For if there is no freedom, one choice stands on the same level as another, all being alike necessitated.

The debate on freedom, by the way, has been

waged too much in the specifically moral realm. There has been in the utterance of the determinist an air of noble tragedy at the plight of man, who is compelled to take courses which arouse moral condemnation in his own mind and in that of his fellows, and yet without any ability to help himself. There is a sad self-pity in reflection of this type. Most of us, however, who might find a solemn comfort in thus pitying ourselves for the black tragedy of our moral helplessness, dislike to be laughed at for the ridiculousness of our mental plight. If there is no freedom whatever and everything is alike determined, all our intellectual processes are determined. The so-called "speculative significance of freedom" is skipped over all too lightly by many a determinist. Determinism is, on the strict basis, the product of forces which never for an instant slip toward freedom, but so is the belief in freedom. This iron-bound structure of law generates in the ordinary mind in all stages of the world's history a conviction that it is not iron-bound. Now, I repeat that while we may work up a good deal of sympathy for ourselves over the moral aspect of our steel-clad helplessness, it is hard to feel anything but humiliation when we reflect that our truth and falsehood have no standard by

which they can be judged. All are alike ridiculously false. Or, if we prefer, all are true—but this is no happier an outcome than the other. We are like children at a movie-play applauding the actors, or shouting warnings to them, when they are nothing but shadows on a film with the ending fixed. We can laugh at it all, or cry at it all, for in such situation laughter and tears are much the same. No, if God makes us at all, he must give us a measure of freedom, provided he has it to give. There is no use of talking about the Christlikeness of God unless God has and can bestow freedom.

This all, however, has to be limited and qualified by a steady grip of confidence in the divine fairness with men. In the chapter on "Power" I wrote of the general necessity of the union of power and responsibility in the divine, but I reserved part of this discussion for this special theme of man's freedom. We must see that there is no use talking about moral or intellectual life without a degree of freedom, but that the granting of that freedom involves an incalculable responsibility for the Grantor. Obviously, we human beings could not be consulted about whether we were to be given freedom or not, or whether we cared to come into the world or not. While

such a question could be seriously put only by a lover of Hibernian paradox, nevertheless a grave moral responsibility for the Creator here confronts us. I have spoken of our freedom, but in the most important of all issues, namely, that as to whether we were to exist at all or not, we had no freedom. Here determination rules. Now, if relations of man to man suggest anything as hints of the fairness of the divine attitude to men, the fact that we were not, and could not be, consulted about coming into this universe implies a stupendous responsibility upon the God who sent us here. There has been a religiously conventional emphasis on the worthlessness of man in the sight of God, an emphasis which at various times in the history of the church has altogether obscured the rights of man at the hands of God. Along with this has gone an assumption that life itself, with the possibility of eternal salvation, has been such a boon that the question of the divine responsibility is sacrilegious. This will not do. Even if life itself be self-evidently a good, responsibilities are upon the Creator for putting men into the stream of life.

Here, again, we must be on our guard lest the general proposition seem to throw more light than it does upon particular facts. It

seems that some human beings are born practically without freedom. They are, as we say, creatures of animal impulse, by which we mean, in some instances, that animal impulses shaped or are shaping them. These are, indeed, an inescapable problem for a just and responsible God, but the question of their own moral or intellectual desert does not arise. They are far, far below a normal human plane, but the fault is not theirs, and the divine justice and compassion can be trusted concerning them. Moreover, we are all limited, but still there is the degree of liberty in human life which makes choices in normal experience possible. We cry out at times that we have not enough freedom, and at other times that we have too much, but, much or little, all the freedom is a gift from God, and the Giver of the gift shares with the receivers the consequences of the gift. I think we all agree that the power involved in the creation of free souls is so immeasurable that the Creator is justified in creation only if the creation takes place in the light of his full knowledge. Volume after volume is being published to-day about God as Life, or as Life-urge, the popular exposition suggesting an unconscious somewhat pushing along through the lower material and animal existences until it comes to a manner

of consciousness, without distinct personality, in man. It may be so, but there is no possibility of interpreting such "urge" in terms of Christlikeness. "Urge" is denied a responsibility which can be held to account. Responsibility for the creation of men can be assessed only if creation takes place through the will of a Creator. Of course if an intelligent God created men without full understanding of all possible consequences, the situation could not be saved by avowals that the creation came as the expression of love, without consideration of consequences. I am speaking more particularly, however, of the doctrine that so-called Life is back of creation. That Life is usually represented as an impersonality to which we could not attribute responsibility.

Here someone cries out that we have arrived at a blind alley—that even God cannot know what a free soul will choose! This brings up an age-old debate which, however, need not detain us long. The foreknowledge-of-a-free-choice argument is a drawn battle. At least it has never been proved that such foreknowledge is a self-contradiction. I do not mean, though, that the responsibility of the Creator would imply that he must foresee what particular direction a free choice would take. Responsibility admittedly must involve a

knowledge of all the possible directions the choice could take. Permit me to repeat what I said about freedom as possibility of choice between or among laws. All that the demands of moral law might require of the divine knowledge is that the Creator know all the possibilities of choices. Absolute foreknowledge of the choice taken might not necessarily be essential, but enough knowledge of all possible outcomes to prevent the creation of men from becoming an irresponsible piece of foolhardiness, out of harmony with the character of God as we see it in Christ, is a just expectation. The risks involved in the creation of a human race we have no means of knowing, but we do not believe they can be assumed without knowledge enough, and power enough, and love enough, to prevent disaster, if God is to be like Christ. Moreover, we do not know what Christlikeness calls for in detailed treatment of this or that person. What we do believe is that divine judgment must not condemn a man for anything for which the man is not to blame. All the influences which we call hereditary, environmental, subconscious, which lie beyond the reach of the man's own will—are grounds for moral judgment against man only so far as he acquiesces wrongfully in them. The ultimate respon-

sibility for them lies outside the man himself in that system of which the man is a part, which implies that the responsibility at last gets back to God himself. We need not shrink from this conclusion. The responsibility can best be lodged with God if we sincerely think of him as like Christ.

In these references to the power and knowledge presumed if God is to create a world of men, I do not take back what I have said about the self-limitation of God in a system like ours. I have in mind now power described in the more spiritual aspects. I do not mean that God is not to create unless he is willing at a crisis to prevent human failure by metaphysically transforming men into puppets. That would be a surrender of the creative task altogether from the moral viewpoint. I here mean by power the resources of education, of persuasion, of spiritual influences. It may be that a world like ours is the best for the training of imperfect wills, but that with the growth of the wills in self-control, a radically different environment might be granted man, an environment which, if given him now, might be the worst for moral training. It has often been said that the final test of Christianity is not adversity but prosperity. It may be that after the moral will has been

disciplined into strength by adversity it can then be trusted to prosperity. The writer of the first chapters of Genesis manifested deep insight when he let us see that it was possible for men to mishandle an Eden prosperity through lack of moral strength. We probably could not use much more light of knowledge than we now have. The events of the Great War showed that. It is evident that in this year of our Lord 1927 the only way to keep civilization from destruction is by development of a moral self-control—a thoroughgoing devotion to righteousness and good will. Otherwise, the growth of knowledge of the forces of destruction may invite world-wide disaster. To come back to the point—the powers of God to which I refer for the development of men are those of the education of mind and heart and will.

It is not for this essay to try to discuss elaborate theories of the salvation of individuals, but it is necessary for me to say that if individuals are to be "lost"—using the old evangelical word for whatever meaning the reader may put into it—the loss can result only after the divine resource, short of making the individual over into a puppet saint, has been exhausted. The evangelical preachers have too often overlooked the responsibilities

assumed by a Christlike God in salvation. There has been too much flavor of arbitrariness, not to say high-handedness, in their presentation of God's dealing with souls. We have long since learned that it is beyond our province to pass judgment on the destiny of individual lives. Even with those who sin against all our understanding of the possibilities of divine grace we are more and more cautious in uttering judgment, because we do not have the divine knowledge and we cannot measure the divine resources. Souls must not be pronounced lost until every resource possible to the divine persuasiveness has been brought to bear upon the stubborn will. The fundamental consideration that men are not here by their own choice, that the measure of necessity and the measure of freedom under which they work are not of their own choice, throws responsibility upon the Creator which only the paying out of the last ounce of divine resource can discharge. If men come to doom, it must be after these resources have been so thoroughly tried that all moral intelligences everywhere will acquiesce in the doom. The public opinion of a redeemed race must finally sanction the divine judgment. Under whatever form we think of heaven it must be the kingdom of moral intelligences. What would we say if

the moral sentiment of heaven failed to sanction and ratify the judgment of God? Then there would at once arise the question as to which was the more Christlike, the judgment of heaven or the judgment of the Creator? This is not intended as irreverence, but an insistence that the final judgments upon moral failure must rest wholly upon a moral base, if we are to think of God as like unto Christ. There must be no trace of arbitrariness whatsoever. The Cross shows how seriously God has taken this responsibility.

When we are using such expressions as "discharging moral obligations," and "counting the cost," we lay ourselves open to the charge of anthropomorphism, but the charge is not to be so heeded as to empty the words of their essential meaning. The moral considerations suggested here may not mean the same to the Creator as to us, but the difference probably is that they mean more to him. He knows what they mean to us. Our meanings point not away from his, but toward his. The essentials of Christ's moral seriousness could not rule with the Creator if he plunged into the launching of a race light-heartedly, or with a love that had not counted the cost. It will never do to imagine the mistaken or evil choices of men as taking God by surprise.

To read the story of Eden, for example, as if the Creator had fitted the world with all manner of goods for men, and as if men had then so surprised God by disobedience that he had to alter his plans and make some second-thought adjustment outside the garden, is to argue against the moral responsibility of the Creator. All the possibilities had to be taken into account. All the costs had to come within the field of view. If the trees in the garden were prepared, the weeds outside were prepared also. Moreover, the moral requirement is that the cost itself shall be justifiable. It would not do to allow for a possible question at the end as to whether redemption had been worth while. The salvation of the human race must not be conceived of after the analogy of the king who goes to war and finds the expenses far outrunning his original estimates, or after the analogy of the house-builder who, after he has begun to build, finds himself embarrassed by unforeseen drains upon his funds. No doubt the cost of the human race to the race itself—because of the harmful influences that men exert over one another—to say nothing of the cost to God himself, must be beyond all our ability to estimate, but we do not honor God in speaking as if he had been taken by surprise in his plans

for men. Dreadful as is the cost, it can be met. If we are to think of God as the Christian God, the launching of a race of human beings was not a foolhardy outburst of irresponsible good-humor, afterward confronting an insoluble situation brought about by the misuse of freedom. That conception is not an honor to God. James Russell Lowell's whimsical word that God would not have allowed men to get hold of the match-box if the universe had not been fire-proof has its point. A God who would have permitted men to burn up the universe in wild excesses of freedom might have been a God of a sort, but not the God of Christ. Here, again, familiarity with the temper and spirit of Jesus is a steadying force. Jesus had none of that silly, sunshiny optimism which will have it that everything is to come out all right by some turn or other, but he never knew blank hopelessness. The bearing of the cross, whatever it means, does not mean a smiling all-will-come-right superficiality, or a helpless despair. It is not a last-minute expedient, but an essential, inherent in the divine putting forth of the powers that are to win men.

It does small credit to God, it hardly is consonant with the revelation in Christ, to represent the redemption of men as brought

about by expedients which suggest last-minute frenzy. Such representation implies that God introduced men into a world without quite seeing the future. Earlier in this essay I spoke of the difficulty of believing that this present universe was created for human purposes alone. That does not mean, however, that God did not know what he was doing in putting men here.

I am not much concerned, in this present discussion, about the problem of miracles as popularly understood, but some debate about miracle does not do credit to God. In the assumptions of some thinkers the scheme of law is in itself so tightly bound that if it is to serve men it must be now and again set aside. It is easy to see how this conception comes about. The weaving of every event to every other in a web of relationships literally "gets on our minds" till we are almost obsessed with a notion of the inflexibility of law. The assumption here argues a measure of helplessness on the part of God, as if God had so committed himself to a tangled net of interlacings that he can do nothing but upon occasion set the law aside. Here we have grave reflection upon the divine responsibility. If God has devised a set of methods that he cannot really use, but which he has to set

aside to redeem men, he is not the God we have a right to accept from the teaching of Jesus. Too much of the argument for miracle leaves God in a dubious plight as having started a system which he had afterward to set aside. The possibility of miracle as departure from the accustomed method is hardly open to doubt by believers in the God of Christianity. The actuality of miracle, as the seizure of the higher powers of nature by the higher spiritual personalities, is likewise not open to serious doubt. Miracle, however, as a desperate tearing loose from all law is questionable.

It is the character of God that is at issue in this debate. We have to do with the fundamental purpose in creation. If that fundamental purpose was appropriate to a God like unto Christ, then the purpose must have been in the divine mind from the beginning. We are not to conclude that the system of laws was inaugurated first on its own account, and was then set aside because an unforeseen crisis afterward arose. If the moral purposes of God are an afterthought, they are not the purposes of the God whom Jesus has taught us to follow. Why may we not hold that the laws were from the outset themselves fit for redemption purposes?

Does it not make for greatness in our view of man to conceive of God as willing to make miraculous departures from law in his behalf? This question cannot be answered without asking ourselves as to the character of God set before us by the emphasis on miracle. The best boon we can confer upon man is to teach him the best idea of God. I insist that there can be little cogent criticism of miracle as the anticipation and seizure of methods beyond the organized knowledge of a given period, but that is not a setting aside of law as if it were of secondary importance. If men are to be saved into a salvation worth while, one element of that salvation must be the development of the mental orderliness and sanity which are best revealed to us in the regularity of the operations of the universe. To be sure, the law as taken in itself seems cold and impersonal, but this is chiefly when we look at the outside objective world. Law is the expression of the regularity of the inner realm as well as of the outer. Miracle as too often taught would mean that the universe proceeds without regard to what comes before or after, that the demands of system are lightly to be thrust to one side. This would argue for the imperfection of the methods of the Divine Mind.

We shall have to exalt more and more the resources of redemption in the realm of law, law being the method by which a responsible God acts. The scientific method, justly viewed, has its value not only in its practical results but in its efficacy in religious revelation. Of course anything can be ponderously studied; and that worthless aims determine much scientific study is altogether too apparent. Still, the scientific method in itself can be made to tend to the development of the religious mood. I refer now more directly to some prerequisites of scientific procedure—the willingness to face the facts and all the facts, the assumption that we have a right to the truth and can know the truth, the ability to suspend judgment and to make a conclusive decision at the end of our reasoning. All this is of the essence of the righteousness which we believe to be so distinctive in the revelation of Jesus. We do not need to be told that the thinking of the day of Jesus had not come within hailing distance of what we call scientific method. Nevertheless, the Christian spirit was from the beginning a willingness to recognize facts. Christianity is a fact-religion, and progresses by the spiritual use of facts squarely faced. There is not a writer of New Testament Scriptures—or of the Old Testa-

ment, for that matter—who does not manifestly live in a fact world. From an early date the great heresies condemned by the church were those which, in the name of extravagant vision or theory, failed to take enough account of actual facts.

I know that there are many who, in spite of all we can say, will have it that emphasis on miracle conceived of as virtual contempt of law makes God's efforts for man's salvation more serious. It may be so, but it makes God's creative activity less serious; and when we are striving to understand the moral nature of God let us remember that after-adjustment is less a tribute to the divine nature than preadjustment. There was, indeed, something of the artificial and mechanical about the old "Plan of Salvation," but the plan did suggest a Planner. The picture of God as the Rescuer of men is not complete without account of his provision for men's rescue. In other words, though the universe is not made for us alone, it, we may believe, contains provision for redemption from evil choices and their consequences, provision woven constitutionally into the texture of which the world is made.

It is trite to say that the greatness of the possibility of a good can be measured by the greatness of the actuality of an evil. This is

notably true when we are thinking of the choices of men. More than this, there seems a degree of self-limitation in the consequences of an evil choice. There may be—there often seems to be—a loosening of further and further beneficial forces in a good choice, more powerful than the consequences of an evil choice. Perhaps in the long run the consequences of good travel farthest. Mark Antony was speaking as an orator and not as a moral philosopher when he declared that the evil men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones. Perhaps in the kingdom of God it is the other way around.

We cannot linger too long with this theme, but we must say that with freedom not an abstract somewhat just rushing about in a void, but a choice of laws which leads to consequences already involved in the choice, and with the Creator expressing his own nature through these consequences, it becomes a duty of men to peer as far ahead as possible toward the consequences. If there is a moral obligation upon God to make a universe of flexible useableness, it becomes the duty of man to bring his mind to bear to make the most of that universe for moral purposes. In a measure it is given to man to enter into the mind of the Creator and become himself

creative. If it was the duty of the Creator to fill the universe with possibilities in the fruitful use of law, it is the duty of man to master the laws.

In a list of divine attributes we occasionally see God's "ownership" referred to. From the early days of life in Canaan the Israelites made their Lord the Baal—the owner—of the land. This expression suggests nothing beyond what has been said in connection with creation. An owner is responsible for the way he uses his possession, but the "ownership" adds nothing to the conception of moral responsibility set forth in discussion of God as Creator.

CHAPTER XI

THE DIVINE KING

From an early day men began to speak of God as King. The race evidently began its conscious history in groups. From the notion of the gods as by some peculiarly intimate tie related to clans or tribes it is easy to advance, as civilization takes on more highly organized forms, to the notion of God as the head of a kingdom. To-day we constantly speak of the kingdom of God. Here, again, we are to summon our conceptions to the test of Christlikeness.

All that we have said about the divine responsibility could be said again in discussing God as King. One of the marvels of human history is the tightness with which the Hebrews welded together the ideas of kingly power and kingly responsibility. When we read of the despotism of the empires which were the neighbors of Israel, we cannot help wondering how a little people, just off the world-roads which connected Egypt and Babylon, could have attained such conviction of responsible kingship. Yet so it was, and one of the shaping instruments in the world's religious thought

was and is Israel's doctrine that a king must be the servant of the people. It would be far-fetched and artificial to discuss ancient Israel in terms of modern democracy, but the difference between the idea of kingship in Israel and that of kingship in Europe until comparatively recent times can never cease to astonish us. The divine right of kings, which for hundreds of years went without effective challenge in European history, never received more than qualified acceptance in Israel.

It may be contended that Israel was a theocracy and that the king was merely a human servant of the Divine King. All the more reason for us to marvel at the ideals which determined the thinking about the Divine King, ideals which had to do with the moral worth of the chosen people and with the moral rights of even the least of the individuals in Israel. To be sure, Israel first thought of God as in a covenant—that is to say, in a moral agreement—to lead the people as a nation, but nevertheless the individual had rights inconceivable in a despotism of the Oriental type.

One of the glories of the Old Testament is the assumption as commonplace that individuals with a grievance can make direct appeal to God. Centuries of Christian teach-

ing have accustomed us to practice in prayer of direct approach to God, but how surprising it must have been in the old days when God was thought of more exclusively as Ruler, to read that Abraham launched the challenge, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"; that Jonah voiced to God himself his resentment at the divine kindliness with a Nineveh hostile to Israel; that Job almost defied God in attacking the ordinary theology of his day as to God's sending suffering upon men.

Now, the Christian Church has always hailed Jesus as Lord, and has sought to rally Christian conceptions of the larger social duties around the doctrine of the kingdom of God. Central principles have been worked out concerning the divine rulership over the larger and smaller groups of men—and on humanity as a whole, which we may profitably examine. The old challenge of the tribes of Israel to their king was: "Wilt thou be a king to us after the manner of a servant of the people?" The church has fastened on kingship as one of the titles of Christ. If we are to take Christianity seriously, we must ask whether we can think of the kingship of God in terms of Christliness. Inasmuch as the wisest statesmanship seldom knows how to

conduct in detail the course of a small social group for any considerable length of time, we may well be excused from the attempt to block out a concrete policy for the divine kingship over the whole human race. In the region of general considerations, however, the path is open enough. To begin with, the responsibility assumed by a Christlike God is to treat kingdoms of persons as ends-in-themselves and not as instruments or means to ends. If God were an exaggerated Napoleon, the expectations might be different, for the Napoleon treats the group as the end, and the individuals merely as nation-stuff, or cannon-fodder. So with all philosophies of the state which erect the state into a superpersonality, or even into an ideal to be made real at the cost of the persons composing the state. The only substantial realities in a group are the individuals who compose the group. There is no soul in the group apart from the souls of the individuals. We may well admit that a race grasped as a unity, with organ adjusted to organ, would be a spectacle inspiring even to the Divine King himself, but even such a race would have its significance only for the persons who gazed upon it.

Let us remind ourselves of the need of keeping close grasp on the significance of per-

sonality in our estimates of social values. There is, as we all know, widespread denial at all times of the existence of the substantial self. We recognize how this denial comes about. The self gets loosened into thoughts or feelings, and drops out of its primacy. If abstract thought becomes the underlying power and thinkers are lost sight of, it is easy to arrive at the notion of a group over-soul beyond the individuals of the group. The current talk, too, about merging oneself into other selves tends in a like direction. One of the most serious obstacles to setting persons forth as the end of all worthy effort is, of course, a doubt as to the substantial reality of persons.

Does not my contention, however, imply extreme individualism, with persons taken separately as the ends toward which the Divine King works? I do not think so. There is no use of speaking of a kingdom unless persons are taken in what we call their togetherness. The individual would not even be an individual if he were not set in society. The greatest instrument the individual can employ for the development of distinctiveness is language, and language is a social product. The central aim of man's duty as laid upon us in the gospel is that of aiding our fellow men. That aid, however, results in the uplift of the

helper himself toward the good and the true and the beautiful. An individual taken by himself is not what he is in a group.

There are fine powers of the soul which may get their chance only in solitude, but there are other fine powers which indubitably unfold only in the social relationship. It is these social powers which we have in mind in speaking of the kingdom of God. We seek the utilization of all the social relationships for the development of the individuals. Not that the persons are finally to be set off by themselves. The Kingdom is to endure forever, if Christ means anything, as a kingdom in these social relationships. Of course the Kingdom itself is to be a spectacle enchaining the rapt gaze of all intelligences of the skies, from the Divine King down to the least man, but the significance of the spectacle is in the value of the persons thus knit together.

The purpose of the kingdom must be to build men up into Christlikeness. Naturally, only the King himself can know what such an aim involves. We are hearing much to-day about democracy, and are even speaking of the democratic God. An age which can thus speak has traveled a long, long journey from the sovereignty of God conceived of as autocracy. Three or four hundred years ago the

sovereignty of God was a thoroughly intelligible conception. If it pleased God to call some persons to eternal life and some other persons to eternal death by sovereign decree, well and good. No human being had any right to file objection. The practical outcome was that in too many cases those who thought themselves called to eternal life and those presumably indicated for eternal doom could have changed places without much upset to the theory, since it was all a matter of decree. We are far, far beyond that.

We are so far that some talk as if we ought almost to have an elected God, which absurd saying does suggest that God ought so to deal with men that by the sanction of their lives they will continually ratify his purposes. As thus understood the modern phrasing points toward an ideal, but there is, of course, involved the consideration that it is the people themselves who must advance more and more toward the realization of the teaching of Christ. The dogma that the voice of the people is the voice of God has a fraction of truth, but only a fraction. Admittedly, in the great general controversies which concern the mass of men, the conviction of the people is likely to gravitate toward the larger human values, and the people are likely so to seize

these values as to attain an approximately substantial justice and righteousness. It would be folly, however, to affirm that this is always so. Moreover, when we decide as to moral issues that cannot be disposed of by a "yes" or "no" we ought not yield to public opinion as some of the democratic doctrinaires would have us. This holds of all issues where the range of knowledge required is beyond the people's reach. We have to rely upon those who know. The trend of the time is to select popular rulers who can be trusted to keep the interests of the people to the front, and then to hold the rulers responsible for the best they can do. In any government the actual procedure is loose and ramshackle enough, but the procedure may be the best available.

Now, there is no expedient for deposing or recalling the divine Ruler of the universe, and no method of proving that he will act according to human interests. If, however, we are to accept him as like unto Christ, we have a right to believe that he orders the affairs of men with the ideal of a truly Christly kingdom before him. To come back to the word "democrat," we are discerning more and more that the best democrat is not necessarily the leader most quickly responsive to a popular vote. If, indeed, a ruler has been put in

power to carry out a policy, and then has refused to carry out that policy, the only honorable course is for the leader to resign. The situation, however, is not often quite as simple as this. Leaders are given power to do their best for the people. To do this they must be trusted to disregard a popular mood or behest if to their large judgment such a disregard seems wise.

In the old days when the doctrine of the divine right of kings was new, a great deal could be said for it. It was not by any means the absurdity it seems now. We require only a superficial recollection of history to recognize that the doctrine took its start in protest against the pretensions of a church scheming toward world-wide ecclesiastical despotism. No doubt it was to the church leaders blasphemy to hint that any other institution than the church could legitimately claim for itself divinity. The church assumed divine right because she thought of herself as holding a supernatural commission. She was the vicegerent of God on earth, no matter what she might actually do. The divinity rested in the commission. Now, when this doctrine began to work itself out into disregard of social justice and righteousness, men began to remark that divinity must show itself in results, and that

a king striving for the welfare of his people was fundamentally more divine than a pope claiming supernatural authority while acting with most unnatural selfishness. The divine right of kings was at bottom better for society than the divine right of popes, for the king could not fall back upon a supernatural commission, but could only justify his divinity by human results. In time kingship showed its weakness. A movement toward secular kingly control which at first promised much went to pieces on the frailty of men when trusted with power without check. If a king could have been found who could have been trusted to work only for the largest and best welfare of his people, that king would have been a democrat in the finest sense. It is interesting to note that when men attempt to justify the career of a despot like Napoleon Bonaparte, they try to make out that the despot was democratic. In a character like that of Napoleon the argument seems humorous, but often it has pertinence in that supreme care for the highest and best good of the masses of men is of the essence of the democratic temper. In defending Napoleon, or any dictator who pays as little heed to what the people say as did Napoleon, it is customary to argue that perhaps without their realizing

their own discernment, such despots sense the policies which make for the largest good of the greatest number, that in spite of their selfishness they are, after a rough fashion, incarnations of a popular mood, that they set out upon courses which are dictated by an instinct toward national greatness, that their power is in the last analysis due to this seizure of the deep-moving public mood. Such men have often known what the people have needed, and have known also how to meet the need. When they have thus understood the need, and have had the skilled expertness to meet it, they have won the popular approval which in the end has to be granted to experts. What are experts, anyhow, but kings in their several realms? There are kings in science, in art, in industry. The divineness of the right of these kings to rule is always to be found in their betterment of human conditions. If an all-wise, all-devoted king should appear, he might well be allowed to reign as long as he remained all-wise and all-devoted. Now, when some of the present-day writers talk about a democratic God, this ideal of devotion to and responsibility for the welfare of men is what they seem to have in mind, together with the further realization that the highest society of which we can conceive would

be one in which the will of God would be continually ratified by men. This double conception would seem to meet all the legitimate demands of those who talk of the democracy of the kingdom of God.

Next we encounter the criticism of those who avow that such argument introduces paternalism into God's relation to human society. Men in groups have a right to self-determination. They must be allowed to make their own mistakes. All of which I grant, and indeed insist upon, but let us get this point as to paternalism straight. What men resent in paternalism is the condescending and patronizing spirit. A God like unto the Christ who never patronized anybody is not likely to found a kingdom on condescension. For the rest, paternalism is sometimes confused with service rendered out of superior knowledge. Nobody in his sound mind objects to helpful treatment from one who knows.

Still, the objector insists that men must be allowed to make social mistakes themselves. This looks promising until we begin to reflect upon the closeness with which men in groups are knitted together, with the innocent suffering from the rashness of experimenters in self-determination. Moreover, actual observation seems to indicate that men in social relations

have always made mistakes in plenty. A decade which has seen wrong national policies bring civilization to the verge of disaster cannot say much about modern society's having too little chance for experiment in self-determination.

If any charge at all is to be brought against the divine government over society, it is more plausible to ask if groups have not had too much freedom. There come moments, indeed, of glorious cooperation among great nations when some common peril threatens society, to give us foretastes and gleams of what the ideal cooperative society may be when men master and obey the laws of God. The havoc which men wreak by the wrong use of social powers is at least suggestive of the good which they may achieve by a right use. Up to date, however, the historic outcome seems dubious, when the whole story of the whole race is taken into sweep of examination. The social policies of nations have not been such as to suggest that men are morally equal to greater freedom than they have had. Take the predicament of the nations to-day, with the most important peoples racing with each other for new instruments of war, with war prepared for as struggles not between armies, but between the peoples themselves, the avowed

intention of war being through economic and psychological pressure to break down the will of an opposing nation.

This is not all. Through the physical losses of nations in war, and through the physical changes which war brings about, the scientific gains in knowledge of the means for the betterment of human conditions won through a hundred years of patient experiment can be off-set and neutralized in one brief span of a few months. When nations employ their liberties to forge chains of new slaveries, we may well pause with the query as to whether the nations have not received too much liberty.

I have not been hesitant about facing the question as to the responsibility of God, and that for the reason that Christianity is a religion of faith. There is no path to mental peace through ignoring the divine responsibility; and yet I urge that the mistakes which groups—national groups especially—make in the use of freedom are a hint by contrast of what might be done if the liberty were directed toward a nobler purpose. God is, indeed, responsible for the freedom of the national groups, but is it to be doubted that many of the mistakes of that freedom come out of the deliberate choices of the groups? For example, there is a cult of nationalism abroad

to-day which purposely seeks to make the idea of God serve a nationalistic purpose working directly toward ends which are the denial of Christlikeness. The nationalism to which I refer is comparatively new. It sets up as the object of group-endeavor so-called "cultural" aims which are to have right-of-way over all other aims whatsoever, either inside or outside of a nation. Up to a few years ago Germany was the foremost exponent of such policy. The German thought and feeling and practice of life were looked upon by Germans as superior to all other cultures. Acceptance of the German ideals was not conceived of as incumbent merely upon Germans. Free choice was even more important than birth, but whether by free choice or by compulsion the peoples of the world were to be brought to acknowledge and accept the superiority of the Germanic civilization. The feature to which I wish to call especial attention was the function of the ideal of God in all this. I do not intend to cast reflection upon the millions of devout Christians in Germany previous to the World War, but so far as official Germany was concerned, God was conceived of as of a German type. There was practical repudiation of the Christlike in God. I say "practical" repudiation, for I am

speaking of attitudes and gestures in actual policies.

If the World War made it any easier for the nations to turn away from force for propagandist purposes, we may as well be thankful for the net gain; but, waiving the question of force, it is enough to detect that at the present hour various nations are preaching the cult of nationalism. Insofar as this is a protest against a vague and misty internationalism which would empty out all the distinctiveness from national individuality, the cult has its justification. Justified, too, are all attempts to make the most of national peculiarities for the sake of contribution to the common stock of the world's culture. Paradoxical as it may sound, the finest contributions to common cultures often come as individuals and groups seek to make the most of themselves. Making the most of themselves, however, means making the best of themselves, and making the best of themselves means good will toward one another.

What I started to speak of was the effect of all this nationalism on the idea of God. Critics of religion always have hugely enjoyed themselves when ridiculing the tendency of men toward anthropomorphism. One of the old Greeks made merry with the idea of God by

declaring that if oxen were to theorize about God, they would picture him as with horns like themselves. Now, anthropomorphism is never more absurd or dangerous than when it conceives of God as having a partiality for this or that particular nation, to the disadvantage of all other nations. That is the theology that justifies the Greek criticism and gives God horns. It makes God a partner with the militarists of all nations, and lends color to the remark of a European statesman that nationalism can never do without religion, for religion must be preserved to bless nationalistic war. It would be a serious count against the character of God that he endowed men with group-freedom, when we look upon the actual slaughters of historic groups, if the more excellent way were not so obvious, though confessedly this raises the question why God gives man so much freedom and so little sense. The more excellent way of cooperation of groups on the basis of mutual respect has lain out in full view from the beginning. If men can capture and harness the forces which make for death, they can do likewise with those that make for life. Perhaps one of the most important lessons of history thus far has been the ease with which men could have found the better way if they had only opened their

eyes and looked. It has been visible for a long time.

So widely has it been true that groups have used their conceptions of God as weapons in social struggle that possibly we have here explanation of the growth of the idea that all that God is, in the field of history, is merely the idealization of the ambitions of the national groups. It is almost impossible to get men to fight for a selfishness which is naked and not ashamed, so that it is necessary to idealize the social policy into a defense of something sacred. There swarm upon us, then, as many different Gods as there are national ideals, though all are called by the one name. With social progress the idea of God becomes nobler and nobler, but, we are told, it never can be more than idea. The doctrine of God is not as repellent as that of tribal gods mingling in the battles beside their worshipers; it represents the best that each group can do in shaping and declaring its ideals. The shortcomings of the conception lie in the inadequacy of the conceivers. They have not yet built an idea big enough to take in the races of men imagined as a brotherhood. The notion of the larger God seems obvious as soon as we get it, but we cannot get it till we make it. Anything may be obvious enough after we have seen

it, but it cannot be seen until it is there. The idea of a king over all men has not been seized earlier because it is nothing but idea, and ideas appear only as there appear idea-makers. I do not claim that this is the explanation of God offered by Durkheim and his school, but the Durkheim exposition is measurably similar to the above.

Some object to the expression, "nothing but idea," on the ground that in the social realms, as in other realms, nothing is nobler than the pursuit of ideals for their own sake. We are told that the scholar does not need a personal embodiment of truth as the object of his devotion. He seeks truth on its own account. Why should a friend of mankind require the actual existence of a Divine King over all men, when the idealization of social purposes will perform the same function? In serving our fellow men we are not shut in to the realistic study of the actual cases of suffering men, women, and children before us. We can see each sufferer as the bearer of an ideal of humanity, and that ideal may be the compelling force with us. When men die for England or America they may not be thinking of an actual England or America at all, but of a nation that has never been, is not now, and perhaps never will be. Why, then, may we

not think of God as the sum of the noblest social ideals, ever growing nobler? Is there not something more worthy in such worship than in the adoration of a personal God, even though that God be the embodiment and the realization of the highest ideals?

We have dealt with all this before. It is another instance of the cart before the horse. Abstraction is made from personal activity, the abstraction is recognized as impersonal; finally the impersonal shifts around in front of the personal, and the personal becomes an embodiment of or specification of the impersonal, possessing the weakness which we identify with the personal in the human forms which we know. It will not do. Abstraction may be a process by which we attain to a knowledge of the God who is the Ruler of all society; but if we are manipulating abstractions in themselves, we are far removed from that atmosphere of reality which clothed the teaching of Jesus.

If we are to hold to the kingship of a Christlike God over society, however, we must face all the consequences and implications of such a belief, consequences from which the impersonal conceptions seek to free us. Above all we must never slacken our grip on the divine responsibility. If the groups are free,

God is responsible for the granting of a freedom which is morally justifiable only on condition that in the knowledge of all possible results of such freedom the grant is worth while. If we are to believe in a Christlike God, let us be fearless in our utilization of the belief. Christianity is in any event a poor half-way house. The only safety is in traveling the full distance.

At periods throughout Christian history there has been strong impulse to regard the social career of the race as so subject to the Divine Will that the social changes are thought to take place by divine choice alone, without regard to the attitude of groups themselves. Now and again this view is denounced as savoring of old-time apocalyptic which made the coming of the kingdom of God wholly a matter of God's good time. Apocalyptic does, indeed, harmfully minimize the forces which are within the grasp of human freedom, but there is about Jewish apocalyptic especially an admirable facing of the responsibility of God for human history. Without at all subscribing to the concrete content of such apocalyptic, we may, in the light of our modern knowledge, admit divine responsibility in some realms where human freedom has little or no scope. For instance, the God of nature is obviously

responsible for physical circumstances affecting the life of the race in those large regions where human will cannot avail at all.

To take an extreme illustration, we cannot by the boldest flight of imagination fancy mankind as able to affect the orbit of the earth, or the position of the earth among planets and stars. Man might adjust himself to an ice age resulting from a lengthening of the earth's orbit, or by the tilting of the earth's pole—though it is doubtful if any social organization yet devised could in such event stand the strain of the race's rush toward the warmer lands—but man could not affect the orbit itself. Before such a change all men could do would be to hold fast their confidence in God. This is but one illustration of conceivable circumstances in which the controlling factors would be beyond human control. A slight change in the amount of heat received by the earth from the sun, a change to either more or less, would bring about a similar crisis. So also would any extensive alteration of any features of the physical order which we consider fixed. In this dependence on the physical, faith repeats the old miracle of believing that things will stick together long enough for the working out of some moral and spiritual results, insisting that the transitoriness of the present order is

no more incompatible with the seizure of eternal moral values by the race than is the decay of the individual human organism incompatible with the seizure of eternal human values by a person. The sense of moral mastery here rests down upon confidence in the responsibility of God, and that confidence is at its greatest as we catch the spirit of Christ.

The divine responsibility must be our stay also before those sweeping tides of emotion which now and again carry everything before them in societies. I am not now thinking of the social disturbances brought about by propaganda, but by sentiments the outcome of mysterious subtle processes which we do not understand. We need not be tied to a doctrine of the unconscious to discern the power in individual and social life of psychical elements which seem to surge upon us from realms usually below the threshold of consciousness. Or at times whole peoples seem excitable or suggestible beyond the ability of any individuals or small groups to check the storm of feeling. Hence come crazes and delusions on the one hand, and, it may be, revivals of enthusiasm for learning an art or religion on the other. Take a historic phenomenon which is not wholly good and not wholly bad—the crusades. No doubt scores of influ-

ences played into the crusades for which men were responsible as agitators and managers, though it is impossible to tell at this distance how far a Peter the Hermit or a Richard the Lion-Hearted was personally an effective cause. Make all allowance, however, for the effect of human choices—it is not possible to say that the crusades were in controlling degree the expression of human freedom. Men were too much swayed by illusions over which they had no mastery. The outcome was both good and bad, speaking now of the actual consequences. With all reverence it may be said that the Divine Ruler of all has the heavy share of the responsibility. If this seems irreverent, let us ask ourselves if it is any more reverent to say that he was not responsible.

The same judgment must be passed upon national and international and racial stirrings and strivings upon which so much of history depends. Let the radius of the play of the individual and social wills be ever so great, we nevertheless come to a field where the result depends upon an interlacing of factors, to which the human will is not as yet adequate. Perhaps the rarest form of human genius is superlative administrative skill, which consists in so weaving forces together as to make them

cooperate toward a desired end. So far as our intelligence comprehends these larger affairs —no matter how much of good will may spread among the peoples of the earth, and no matter how far international and inter-racial organization may go—for as long a time as we can see ahead the social future lies beyond the reach of human administrative skill. Here God is responsible.

In the light of the teaching of Christ there can be the utmost frankness and freedom in thus acknowledging the divine responsibility. In these mighty realms the control is beyond us. Our plight is similar to that in our relation to the mechanical forces of the world. We are sure that mathematical formulas rule every stir from suns to atoms, and we are sure that our minds are capable of reading the separate formulas. The interrelations and interworkings of the processes, however, we cannot master because of their intricacy and immensity. If this is true in the realm of mathematics, much more is it true elsewhere; but just as we have confidence in the sway of the mathematical principle in its own realms, so also do we have confidence in the sway of moral principle in universe-wide processes whose secrets we do not profess to be able to read.

How can we speak thus of the responsibility

of God without seeming to encourage fatalism? If the responsibility is God's why worry? What can we do to help or hinder? In these larger spaces probably nothing—but that does not minimize the importance of freedom in the limits within which we are placed. Granted that the world in which we move has meanings and purposes beyond us, nevertheless the fact remains that we are in this world, and that we can make enough use of this world to build ourselves into increasing freedom. The conviction of the responsibility of God for the events over which we have no control ought to increase and release human energies rather than to check and slow them down. Certainly, the Christlikeness of God ought to beget that calmness of spirit without which effective labor is impossible.

Here I wish to digress long enough to say a word about the missionary as an agent in hastening the coming of the larger kingdom of God. It does not fall within my purpose to discuss the so-called secular agencies through which the Divine Ruler brings men into closer relationships, but a word is perhaps in order as to the significance of the spread of the idea of the Christlikeness of God as a factor in bringing the new kingdom. One of the tragic features of existence in non-Christian

lands is the prevalence of fatalism. In India the people seem to think themselves at the mercy of the gods who work through nature. In China a social spirit has stiffened the minds of the people into the notion that in the presence of the group the individual is nothing. If Indian and Chinese peoples can be brought to a realization that a Christlike God, and not fate, is back of the forces of the world, the first step can be taken toward nation-wide and race-wide relief, for the fundamental trouble with both China and India is a wrong idea of God. There are, indeed, some forces, as we have said, which are altogether beyond human control, but there are others which for ages have seemed beyond human control but which can measurably be utilized for the betterment of human conditions. The Indian feels that famine comes because fate wills it through blowing of a dry and rainless wind, but within limits men can foresee and provide for famine. The Chinese feels that the belief of his people in the right of way of the mass over the individual is from the gods, but nevertheless the social spirit can be controlled into a different channel. So that in spite of what I have said about great natural and social forces as beyond human control, there are some such agencies which are in a degree within our

control. Moreover, it is possible to make happier adjustment to the most inexorable necessities once we get the Christ-idea of God. No greater service can be rendered than the preaching of the missionary that God hath indeed made of one blood all nations of the earth, that all may dwell together in a brotherhood of peoples, with each people preserving its own distinctiveness and at the same time united to every other.

It is fortunate that at the present hour the recognition of the sanctity of all varieties of national and racial life is taking the form of emphasis on the worth of the cultural systems of all peoples. There is nothing but harm in seeking to rob groups of their distinctiveness. The only union worth while rests on the basis of the diversity of the uniting factors. Saint Paul's picture of the variety of organs and functions in the Body of Christ applies directly to an organized humanity. Still, even this important truth can be wrongly stressed. I once knew a distinguished social student who protested against teaching the Christian idea of God to a non-Christian tribe because, he said, it was important for the total culture of the world to have that tribe's idea of God persist in its purity. That is to say, this student wished the interesting but inadequate

idea of God which the tribe held, to be an instructive theme for the study of those outside the tribe, while he did not wish those inside the tribe to get a larger and better idea from outside. The selfishness of this attitude needs no comment—a selfishness illustrated often enough in current exhortation not to disturb "native" customs and ideas.

CHAPTER XII

THE DIVINE FATHER

Some teachers of Christianity tell us that fatherhood is the fundamental word in our interpretation of God—that all the divine attributes have to be approached as attributes of a father. Those who write thus are mostly taking the Christian idea of fatherhood for granted, and no harm is done. It is well for us to remind ourselves, however, that Christ-likeness is more basal for Christianity than fatherhood, for "God the Father" depends for its significance upon the quality of fatherhood. It is essential to Christianity that we conceive of the Divine Fatherhood as Christlike.

As soon as we pass from the study of God as King to God as Father some conclude that we have moved out of the sphere of the social relationships to that of the individual as an individual. Repeatedly it has been said that Divine Fatherhood makes the individual stand solitary in the presence of his God. The substance of this truth we shall always have to admit, but it is not possible to step decisively away from the social conception of the kingdom of God by speaking of God as Father,

for Fatherhood so implies the relations of brotherhood and of Christian contacts as to make the social conception even more important than does Kingship.

Important as is the doctrine of fatherhood for the significance of the individual, we cannot think of individuals as existing primarily on their own account and then as woven into the family relationship. The family and the individuals that compose it necessarily coexist. The family would, of course, be nonexistent apart from its members, but the members would be almost nonentities apart from the family relationship. An important task, then, for the Christian idea of the divine Fatherhood is to inquire as to the nature of the family of God as a group.

All we are concerned about is to see whither the assumption of the Christlikeness of God will lead us if carried out to the full length. If, then, God the Father has the Christ-spirit we are not to think of him as doing the best he can with men already here, or as calling men into existence by haphazard, by the workings of irrepressible fullness of life, or out of impulsive affection. If God is a Father after the mind of Christ, men are here because the wise and holy love of God calls them here. The race is not, from the Christ-

view, "on hand" for God to deal with just as he can or may.

Nor can we believe that God the Father creates men as individuals and then adjusts them to one another as best he may. The idea of the family is necessarily prior to the idea of the individuals as such, even if we concede, as we do, that the aim of all creative effort is to build the individuals into the largest and best life. That is to say, what one individual is to be depends upon what all the other individuals are to be. To put it crudely, what one person is to be depends upon the number and kind of other persons there are to be, and the possible relations among them. In the creation of the divinely fathered family the purpose necessarily works inward from the encompassing general conception to the particular individual.

A first legitimate expectation is the negative one that in the family it will not be the divine purpose that any individuals be used merely for the benefit of other individuals, or for the benefit of society, without regard to the rights of such utilized individuals. A person may well take other persons as the aim of his own endeavor, but that is different from saying that anyone else can use him as instrument for the ends of any third person or persons.

I may look upon myself as an instrument to be developed into fineness for the service of any ideals I choose, but that is quite another matter from someone else's using me as an instrument.

The first requirement, then, if we are to have a family based on the Fatherhood of God is justice in the Father's dealing with the family. The late Dr. Charles W. Eliot, of Harvard, once uttered a profoundly wise opinion which at first sounded cold. He declared that it is much better for the children in a family to think of the father as just, and as entitled to respect because of justice, than for them to think of the father as affectionate, as "affectionate" is ordinarily used. In reflecting on God the Father the first requisite is that we think of him as just.

Here someone objects that the less we poor humans speak of God as justice the better for ourselves, for in the course of justice none of us would see salvation. This reminder ought to keep us from any spiritual conceit, but let us not forget that if we do not build on justice in thinking about God, it does not make much difference what we build. The responsibility for the founding of that family which is the race of men is with God. Let us keep that straight always. We are not

clamorous for knowledge, for God's reasons which are beyond our grasp. We are willing to wait till we are able to understand, even if we wait for ages, but we are not willing to live without protest in a universe governed by irresponsible injustice. Of course if the universe were unjust, or indifferent to justice, our protests would not do any good except to relieve ourselves, but that would be something.

Justice, however, is not to be defined merely in the negative sense that the needs of the family shall be so met that the members do not harm one another. There is the positive requirement that the whole family relationship be such as to benefit each individual member. While we cannot specify a single concrete item of the moral demand as to the just dealing of God with men, we can see some general obligations which must freely express the divine nature if that nature is Christlike. There must be, first of all, the inescapable moral obligation to build men into the likeness of Christ. After that is the duty to put into the hands of men themselves power which will make for the upbuilding of the family just as fast as that responsibility can safely be assumed by men, regard being had for all the interests of the Kingdom. In other words, light and power must be given

man. Light without power adds to the resentment against frustration, and power without light spells disaster.

The task before a Divine Father—accepting him as Christlike—is to educate or train men into Christlikeness. Anyone will concede that this means training in loyalty to the highest Christian ideals. Perhaps not everyone will concede what I next say, but I do not see how we can deny that loyalty to the highest Christian ideals involves the constant intellectual search for light on the application of Christian principles to all the situations in which men find themselves. When we avow the divineness of what is called to-day the scientific method we seem to some to have said too much, but the scientific method is the ordered, consecrated search for God's truth. There are readers of the Scriptures who suppose that all we have to consider in a problem of conduct is to ask what Jesus would do, and then to turn to the New Testament and find what Jesus would do. My whole argument in this essay turns around the duty of Christlikeness of conduct, but my readers will bear witness that I have not asked what the Christlikeness of God calls for in a single concrete detail, though the demands in general become increasingly clear. So with going to the gospel

for light on a particular human duty. Jesus did not proclaim codified rules. He applied principles to the concrete, but those principles have to be reapplied to duties of our own time in the light of all the information available. I do not think it is too much to say that, once the human will is turned in self-surrender to the divine will, the chief duty of man thereafter is to seek to find how to work out that will into daily life by search with the intellect. If, now, the scientific method, putting the best construction on the term, is not divine, where is any method which is divine? As it is the religious duty and privilege of man to search for light, it is the duty and the privilege of God to grant light to men's eyes just as fast as the eyes can stand the light. Religious education may, indeed, sometimes be a superficial manifestation of pedagogical mechanic, but, after all, the responsibility is upon God to help in the religious training of men.

If we believe that we are members of the family of a Christlike God, we can be confident that God deals with each of us in entire knowledge of what we are. We are mysterious enough to ourselves, and we are mysteries to one another. There are depths in human nature out of which strange impulses are con-

stantly springing, to our vast astonishment, but these impulses are known to the Father of all long before they become articulate to us. In the light of his full knowledge we may be confident that in training men God will not put upon them burdens that are too heavy. If men break under burdens for which they are not responsible, the obvious conclusion is that the question of moral desert does not arise in such collapse. The problem is not, then, one of guilt, but of the exercise of the divine resources of strengthening and healing. There is no reason why a member of the family of God should bear the stings and lashings of conscience over failures for which he is not responsible.

In all this field, however, we must walk with great circumspection of thinking. It is true that we should not whip ourselves with blame for falling short of an ideal when we are not to blame, but there is no excuse for willing acquiescence in a low ideal. The situation here is somewhat like the plight of the wise man in the presence of an intellectual ideal. The wise man may be entirely conscious that, as far as he has gone in his study, he has made no voluntary mistake, but he may, with every increase of knowledge, feel increasingly ashamed of his own ignorance.

There is a paradox here. The wisest man deplores most his own ignorance, and the saint feels most deeply the shortcomings of his own moral conduct. This, however, is different from feeling unjustly self-condemned for evils we have not committed. Speaking paradoxically again, the saint comes to feel that the progressive revelation of the moral ideal which ever reproves what he has attained with the beckoning glimpses of heights still further on, is not condemnation but favor. Once the ideal is discerned, the will becomes evil if it does not set itself toward the ideal.

If the life growing in sonship in the family of God is not to be burdened with tasks too heavy, it is equally clear that such a life can cherish a confidence that the tasks will not be too light. There is no teaching about God less true to Christianity than that which would make him so help men as to weaken them. God is a helper, not a doer of everything for men. Consider for a moment a current debate on the method of the divine revelation. The fundamental difficulty with the theological party which calls itself fundamentalist is that it seeks to make revelation too easy with its doctrine of an infallibly dictated book. In actual experience, if we take the Book as thus dictated, it is not easy,

because of the contradictions in the dictations; but if we had such a dictated book, sun-clear to the last syllable, we should lose the invaluable benefit of learning how to search out eternal principles from transient circumstances, how to show our loyalty to principles when we have to apply them in the dark, or at most in a half-light, how to make ventures with moral truth out upon uncharted seas of change. The trouble with infallibility of detailed revelation would be that it could not develop robust saintliness. The family of God is not ruled by rules. The letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life. How one can conceive of God as like Christ and hold to a mechanically dictated revelation from God is a mystery. The bottom objection to such a method is that it is not fair—not fair to men, not fair to God. It is too easy and too hard, too hard as emptying the zest and adventure out of the life in the divine family.

Kant once said that the wisdom of God is shown quite as much in what is withheld from us as in what is revealed to us. We cannot well gain moral development in total darkness or in total light. We read to-day that the noblest ideal for man is to live according to a correct moral standard, aware that the universe itself is blind, hostile to, or indiffer-

ent to all moral interests whatsoever. The genuine morality, we are told, is to confront this hostile universe with unconquerable heroism and to go down fighting. Whereas men have at some periods of the world's history been so optimistic as to believe that everything will come out right in the end, no matter how bad men are, the modern subscriber to the creed I am considering will have it that everything will come out wrong in the end, no matter how good men may be. Now, this is well enough for certain moods, or for men who have never themselves felt the sharp slap of the world's rough hand. If a moralist has enough of this world's goods to be physically comfortable he can, at his ease, counsel men to struggle unyieldingly against black fate. Confronted by that fate, however, the masses of men are likely to let go of high moral purpose, and to help themselves as best they can, ordinarily finding peace in the stupor of moral indifference. When men do hold fast to lofty morality there is usually an implicit hope which the holder himself may deny. On the other hand, too much light is bad. If modern pedagogy has taught us anything, it is the desirability of gradualness in the revelation of truth. In most realms there is no way of turning on the light all at once.

Just what would it mean to have all the light of mathematics turned on at once? It would mean nothing, for we can attain to mathematical knowledge only by mastering a step at a time. In the kingdom of moral ends the successive glimpses of understanding must be earned if they are to be genuinely moral. Evolutionary method as having to do with the creation of the worlds may merit all the objurgations that some theologians urge against it; but, taking human beings as they are, evolutionary method as the dependence of each stage of knowledge on those that precede it, fits in well with the needs of men. He who exhorts us to follow the moral ideal even to inevitable defeat has the right of it so far as the worth of the ideal itself is concerned. If a final glorious triumph of the moral throughout the universe could be uncovered to the gaze of men—and it could only be so revealed if somehow the triumph affected material conditions—the attention of the imperfectly moralized minds would be fixed on the material results, to the loss of moral development. What we need is confidence in the Father above, and light enough freely to take the next step. Knowledge is, indeed, an end in itself, but it is also a tool, or a power. On the power side it is important that it get

into the hands of children, or of childlike intelligences, only as far as they can use it.

The members of the family, however, must be given the power as fast as they can use it. The most difficult task in the training of children is to respect their growing independence. Let us look at an ideal family—or one as nearly ideal as we are likely to find under earthly conditions. The father does not regard his children as any sort of investment, to bring any sort of return to himself. He does not gaze upon them with the doting fondness which would keep them always children. He does not harbor any purposes concerning them except such as have to do with their development into manhood or womanhood. Now, there comes a period when he begins to allow a child to make his own choices, even if a wrong choice brings pain to the child. Of course there is a watchful eye on all. A wise father will hardly encourage a boy to touch a live electric wire to show him that electricity will kill, yet the father does insist on a boy's having a chance to make his own mistakes. He gives the boy some money to spend on himself, for which he is expected to render account. He gives him some money to spend without rendering account. He allows the son to form his own opinions, and

sometimes seeks to set them right. At other times he encourages the son to opinions with which he himself does not agree, and does not seek in the slightest to modify those opinions.

All this implies patience, patience, and still more patience. If we are to read at all seriously the New Testament teaching as to the character of God, we may well believe that in the eyes of the Father men are estimated, so far as favor and disfavor go, by intention rather than performance. There is a mass of confused thinking as to this aspect of the divine attitude toward men. For example, the certainty with which a painful consequence follows a wrong choice in the material world of cause and effect is now and again taken as an illustration of the swiftness of the divine punishment of sin. Such consequences may have nothing to do with sin. We can readily see that if ours is to be a universe of law, like consequences must follow like antecedents. Just why consequences so often work out disastrously for individuals we do not know, but our lack of knowledge is no proof that the problem is insoluble. We do know—or men ought to have known all these centuries since the book of Job was written—that the suffering of painful consequences may befall

an innocent man who has taken no false steps whatever. Final understanding will no doubt reveal that there are some pains we must suffer from the very fact that we live in a universe at all, though, as we have repeatedly said, we may not be able to take advantage of this consideration as concrete explanation of a particular crisis. To get back to the main track, the belief in a Christlike God warrants us in assuming that the actual results following mistaken choices, which we have made in all good faith, are not to be viewed as tokens of divine impatience.

We are warranted also in believing that the divine patience covers those mistakes in which motives are mixed, or in which men may be wrongly influenced, without being conscious of the influence. It is easy for an onlooker to pass severe judgment on the selfishness of a fellowman when that selfishness seems obvious. The onlooker may declare that if the selfish man is not aware of his own selfishness he has befooled himself. Now, human nature is such that we can act selfishly without intending to do so, without being aware that we are doing so, without deceiving ourselves. What often seems to be selfishness—and what, indeed, may be selfishness—may be the operation of a kind of instinct of self-preservation. This is espe-

cially true when what we call class interests are involved. It is often evident to a by-stander that the conduct of certain persons is dictated by the instinct of self-preservation of their political, or industrial, or social class. The action of the members of a threatened group—or the reaction, as we say in these psychological days—takes place spontaneously, but seems to be deliberately dictated by class interest. Now, it is not possible for any but the thousandth, or the ten-thousandth man, to be at all aware of the pressure of this interest in himself. He thinks of himself as wholly sincere. When it comes to standing against the interest of one's own class the man who can do this is rare indeed. While it is easy for those of us on the outside to charge men with selfishness, the Divine Father confronts a demand for patience which, we may be confident, is met, and fully met.

While the moral demand upon man is that at least for a time he work in the half light, the demand is equally imperative that God work in the full light. We can trust him not to bring souls into a world like ours unless he knows them through and through to their last possibility. We can discern that human beings are not animals on the one hand, or completely moralized wills on the other. The

peculiarity of the human condition is that it is the passage over from a state in which the animal impulses rule to a state in which these impulses are to be ruled in the name of the Christ ideal. The Christian need is control, the natural impulses not stamped out, or brought to heel, but controlled for an ideal. The world has tried out the surrender to animal impulses, and we all know the disasters. The church has tried out the downright subjugation and extinction of the natural, and we know the ruin along that path. Now, the control of impulses, impulses that we ourselves only vaguely understand, is almost insuperably difficult. We may well count upon the patience of the Christlike God as we strive to work our way through.

Here is as good an opportunity as any to speak of the obligation upon a Divine Father to reveal his purpose toward his children as soon as the children can grasp that purpose. In this essay I am trying to keep away from formal and technical theology, but I am sure I do not violate my own purpose in insisting that it is upon moral bases like those I have been trying to sketch out that all adequate technical theology must be built. In my introductory chapter I tried to show that through the doctrines of incarnation and atonement the

church has from the beginning been trying to express her conviction that in Christ God has done all he possibly can to show his purpose for men. If it is imperative for us to show to God what Christ, as the realization of the highest moral and spiritual values, is to us, it is imperative also for God to show us what those values are to him. The charge cannot be urged that God has delayed too long in proclaiming his purpose to men. A more pertinent query would be as to whether God has not revealed his purpose in Christ sooner than we can make much of that revelation.

The sensitiveness to responsibility revealed in Christ—a responsibility holding for the Divine Father—calls for the assurance to men as to the divine intentions toward them. The revelation in Christ, so to speak, outflanks our perplexities. It does not meet them by direct answer. It rather gives us a Father whom we can trust when we cannot understand him. It is altogether impossible for us at present to get an answer to many detailed questions. The ramifications reach too far for our intellects. We can, however, see in Christ the revelation of a spirit in the Father which we can trust.

As long as the church remains loyal to essential Christianity she will be insistent upon

phrasings of incarnation and atonement which will make Christ mean most to God as well as to men.

This will involve change of theological statement in the direction of enlargement, provided the church is living an enlarging life. The difficulty with many theories of such matters is, not that they are heretical, but that they are not big enough. They are sound enough as far as they go, but they do not go far. There are various systems which are formally good enough, but Christian consciousness in church and individual will have to decide whether they are adequate or not. Here, by the way, is a challenge for the exercise of charity among believers. As long as the believer finds in a theory about Christ a statement which makes Christ and God mean most to him, he should not be overkeen to charge another believer with heresy for holding to a different view which, for that other believer, meets the like test of spiritual adequacy. It can hardly be maintained, however, that any theory about Christ will finally satisfy the Church's conception of God as like unto Christ which does not make Christ of the utmost significance for God. Two extremes should be avoided. Christ as just a masked divinity acting a part upon the earth, with no sub-

stantial entrance into human life, does not make him significant enough. Christ as merely a man with no special uniqueness of relation to the Father in heaven does not make him significant enough. At any and all times the Lordship of Christ must be made to contain all that we can rationally and morally pour into the term. On the basis of this essay we may think of him as the self-expression of God. Language has a double aim—the communication of thought to another than the revealer himself, and the self-satisfaction or self-realization of the revealer. The revelation in Christ may well be taken as moral revelation on the part of God, and likewise as God's moral self-expression. Without seeking to delve into mysteries too deep for us it may be suggested that probably the profoundest significance of the work of Christ is its satisfaction of the moral impulses of the Divine Father.

Here too is as appropriate a place as any to speak a word about God as Judge. The judgeship of God and the Fatherhood of God should be taken together. Let us rid our minds at once of the notion that, in the judgments which we have a right to expect from a Christlike God, impartiality would be any especial virtue. In our human contacts one

with another impartiality is, indeed, somewhat of a virtue, simply because, human nature being what it is, partiality is almost certain to result in injustice. When, however, we are thinking of the Divine Judge we have to remember that he is also the Divine Father. Abstract impersonal law is an instrumental creation of our own, of considerable use in the control of society. The justice of the Divine Judge and the mercy of the Divine Father can also be set over against one another as an academic exercise in theology, or, rather, in the shuffling of theological phrases, but how can anyone who sees in Jesus a revelation of the Spirit of God suppose that there is the possibility of any such separation in reality? One of the saddest travesties in the history of religion has been the extent to which the whole theme of judgment has been pulled out of the atmosphere of a family relationship and transferred to the atmosphere of the court-room, the atmosphere which more than all others in dealing with human relationships, makes for the mechanical and artificial. Whatever else we may or may not believe about the temper of Jesus, we can be sure that his temper was not that of a lawyer.

The judgment of the Father is not—except possibly as a last resort after men have had

the chance which to all moral intelligences throughout the universe would seem adequate —chiefly a passing of final sentence upon souls before a bar. It is an attitude more like that of a friendly critic who is seeking, not for faults to condemn, but for excellences on which to build. It may be that when we get the light of the upper skies on the divine handling of men, one of the remarkable features of that handling will be the extent to which the Father-Judge has ignored the mistakes for the sake of bringing out the good. Recall what has been said about conceiving the divine knowledge of man's inner life as insight based on sympathy. A law court has to give central place to what is called objective fact. Did or did not an accused do this or that?—though, to be sure, motive has to be considered in a legal finding. The divine judgment of men, however, is chiefly inner, different from that of accusation and penalty on the basis of outer deed. The task is discipline, correction, reproof, and praise also.

The late Borden Parker Bowne once made a profound remark about the Fatherhood of God. He declared that the transgressions of men must be considered, first of all, from the point of view of membership in the divine family; that the wrong choices of men have

at least at the outset to be taken as are offenses of children against parental control, and that the possibility of a child's finding himself forthwith outside of the family because of disobedience or heedlessness, is not to be thought of. The free and easy finality with which, in other days especially, church leaders presumed to say what persons were inside the divine family and what persons outside, was a travesty on the very idea of the family. There are sins of the flesh and sins of the spirit. By sins of the flesh I mean all those slips which come out of the physical conditions and entanglements in which we live on earth. The designation can properly include much more than ordinary fleshly indulgences. It embraces all the weaknesses coming out of our being enmeshed in a material world. On the other hand are the deliberate resolves which make choice of evil, the purposeful rejection of fatherhood. Bowne himself looked upon this as the darkest possibility before the soul, and did not draw back from the conclusion that a will can seal itself to evil forever. Still, rigorous insistence upon this possibility only makes the stronger the contention that men must not pass hasty judgment as to who is inside the family and who outside. Here, as elsewhere, we can hold fast the gen-

eral principle without the slightest intention to pass sentence on a given individual. No man alive is wise enough—or good enough—to draw the line in actual human groups in any manner suggestive of judgment. That is the province of the Father-Judge.

Once more, we cannot close this section on the divine fatherhood without at least a glance in the direction of immortality. Here again, I do not wish to enter the lists with formal arguments. The ground for our belief in immortality is our conviction that God is a Father—that God is like unto Christ.

There is no formal argument, anyhow, that will of itself here bring deep certainty. It is quite generally conceded that no logic avails conclusively against immortality. The inherent dependence of spiritual processes upon physical processes has never been established. Thinking, for example, may take place only when particles of nerve substance are in a particular relation to one another, but no movement or relation of nerve substance accounts for the unity and persistence necessary in the thinking agent. Let the dependence of thought on brain be ever so close, that does not forbid us from concluding that thinking might be of finer quality if the mental activity were brought into relation to a finer quality

of substance in some other sphere than this. As for there being no reason why man's life should continue into some other sphere, what reason is there for its being in this sphere? The argument that it is absurd that creatures of no more intrinsic worth than human beings should live after physical death is a hazardous one. It keeps suggesting the question as to why some of us exist at all. Yet here we are!

No, on the basis of formal argument alone it would require an endless existence itself to supply adequate time to establish a convincing case one way or the other. The attitude we take toward immortality depends on our idea of God. If God is like unto Christ, if God feels toward men as Christ felt, we simply ask ourselves whether such a God could conceivably call men into an existence like human life, and then let them pass out into nothingness after a career like that on earth. Let us put only a scant minimum of suggestion from the earthly family into our interpretation of the divine family. Let fatherhood for God imply the least conceivable. How can it be reconciled with a willingness on God's part to have men cease to exist at physical death? Nor can immortality on such basis of fatherhood be merely an immortality of good influences, or a conservation of spiritual forces

with the personal identity lost. Any earthly father who has stood at the grave of a dead son knows what a mockery it would be to say that the boy lives on in that the good influences set going by his life persist. An earthly father will naturally grasp at that straw of comfort if nothing more is possible, but it is indeed a poverty-stricken straw. So with all talk about the absorption of the finite into the infinite with the personal identity destroyed. That is worse than nothing to fatherhood. No, if persistence of personal identity beyond death is not possible, let us stop talking about the Fatherhood of God, for if this life is all the divine fatherhood is only a pleasant figure of speech.

This subject is not disposed of by declaring that multitudes of persons are not interested in immortality—they would as willingly cease to be as not. We, however, are quite as much interested in where this entire problem of immortality leaves God as in where it leaves men. We need not believe in God at all unless we choose to, but if we are to believe in him as moral, we can fairly and reverently say that he must face the judgment of all righteous intelligence as to how he treats men. It may be true that, as a cynic once said, no human being would care to go back and live over a

single month of his life if he were just repeating a particular month. All the more reason why men should be given a chance at a deeper meaning than that of a life like ours. Better believe in no God at all than in one not fully just. Of course, if God is not the God of Christ, eternal life would not be desirable. If the good and the true and the beautiful are not of the warp and woof of the universe, we can now get our fill of life. If God is like Christ, we can believe in immortality. If he is not like Christ, who desires immortality?

CHAPTER XIII

THE DIVINE COWORKER

I HAVE called this chapter the "coworker" because I wish to linger for a little around the claim that the deepest companionship between God and men comes at last to a working together. There is scant warrant in the scriptural representations of God for the notion that men are always to regard themselves as children of God in what might be called a nursery significance. There do, indeed, come moments when we feel as weak as infants before the mysteries of the universe. In such moments we need the assurance that underneath us are the everlasting arms. Sonship, however, is more than this. In a home at all approximating the ideal, children do not cease to be interesting when they become adult. The ideal is more nearly realized in a home where the love between father and sons deepens as they all work together in a common task.

Christianity is a religion of activity. There is no profounder characterization in the New Testament of the intimacy between Jesus and the Father in heaven than the declaration,

"The Father worketh hitherto and I work." The final Christian intimacy between God and men is an intimacy of laboring together. The conclusion at which I think the Christian revelation arrives is that the friendship of men and God arises not out of direct contemplation of God by men, but out of inner understanding attained by men as they labor for the objects of concern to God.

Far be it from me even to guess at the chief objects of the Divine Purpose, but look at the possibility of coming to a realization of the divine nearness in what seems to be Civilization's supreme task at the present hour. Religion has long been regarded as the province of the individual soul in its relation to God. This has been preached so persistently and so long that the responsibility for making all the social relations Christian has been thrust to one side. Suppose that all men everywhere, in what we call the individual relation to God, could be converted to the service of God. Would that solve all our problems? It would not. If the more social obligations, of the kind I now have in mind, could be accepted by everybody as of sole importance, would all our problems be solved? Certainly not. As historic fact, however, the emphasis has been laid so exclusively on the inner, sub-

jective, individual phases of religion that all civilization is now in peril because of the un-Christianized contacts between groups. So well have the teachers of the limitation of religion to the personal wrought, that one who tries to get any emphasis on the larger duties between men is often charged with preaching a so-called social gospel of doubtful standing, emphasizing "environmental" rather than spiritual factors.

If we are to have a God at all, we may as well have one of the widest interests. The idea that the Holy Spirit wells up in the individual consciousness, doing the essential work there, and then by an after-thought tying individuals together, has incredibly slight basis in the Scriptures. I have been trying to say all along that society exists only in the persons that compose it; but, for the sake of the persons themselves, the movement must be from the circumference toward the center, as well as from within outward. The most is made of the individual when we think of him as essential in a system. Men arrive at their best as individuals through the social contacts. So that the time has come to preach the conversion of the wider relationships between men, or, if that sounds impersonal, the conversion of individuals in their social

relationships of the wider order, all for the welfare of the individuals themselves.

It may be well for the ardent Protestant in particular to remind himself that the work of Protestantism is not yet complete. Protestantism has not yet supplied effective substitutes for some agencies it destroyed. In those Middle Ages which we now see were not Dark Ages by any means, the church brought all social relations under its sway. The church intervened between warring nations and quarreling nobles, between feudal lords and serfs, between employers and employed, between wrangling individuals. That the church was herself at times part and parcel of an oppressive rule, that she fell far, far short of her opportunities no one doubts; but nevertheless the ideal of the church was evident. It was to touch all phases of life with a redeeming impulse. Protestantism was a justified revolt against an ecclesiasticism which tried to redeem men by fiat, by arbitrary official authority, by force. When Protestantism, however, laid stress exclusively on justification by faith it opened the door to an extreme individualism which neglected the social contacts. While the Protestant leaders have tried to correct this tendency in the name of infallibilities of one sort and another quite as rigorous as infalli-

bility of the church, the tendency still persists, to the abandonment of vast spaces of social life to secularism. The field of international contacts has become secularized to such an extent that only by the accident of a Christian's now and again seeking on his own account as a statesman to guide a nation toward justice, have there been any notable attempts to make international dealings Christian. Only recently has there been any strenuous effort to create an international public opinion definitely and avowedly based on Christian principles. Lowes Dickinson is probably correct in his judgment that the conduct of all the nations alike in the quarter-century preceding the Great War was not conduct at all, but a drift toward international anarchy. The international relations have been a no man's land.

How much effort has there been, or is there now in this day of assumption of Nordic superiority, to make Christian the racial contacts? Say all we please about the duty of converting individuals to the kingdom of God, the obvious fact is that the color of the skin of millions of persons on earth at the present hour prevents their getting a chance to hear any effective preaching of the gospel. When we come to industrial relationships we hear

that the church has no right even to an opinion as to economic righteousness. Now, if we stop an instant to ask how much preaching of the purely individualistic gospel it will take to offset wars between nations and clashes between races and quarrels between industrial groups, the reply is that no amount of such preaching will avail, for the individualistic message does not get to grips with these issues. It does not even come within sight of the issues.

The task before Protestantism is to replace the old-time authority of the Roman Church over all phases of human conduct with a spiritual influence which will touch all the phases. The time is not likely soon to come when this social emphasis will be overdone. When such a day does come, enough discerning spirits will be on hand to restore the balance. At the present moment the supreme Christian need is an emphasis on the wide circumference from which one should look in toward the lives of individuals. We do not make the most of the conception of a moral universe otherwise, for a moral universe is a morally organized system.

I have singled out this one task for its own surpassing importance and also for illustrative purpose. If God is like Christ, if men are

sons of God, what could possibly be the desire of such a God for his children except that they join with him in the world-wide redemptive task? What better basis can there be for companionship than laboring together? No doubt if we are to look upon God just as an efficient worker, managing the universe, we can easily ask ourselves why he should choose to work through poor tools like men. If, however, we think of God as a Father, we can well ask ourselves as to what better medium of communion there could possibly be than copartnership in the tasks supreme in the sight of God.

In any working together of God and men it is to be taken for granted that men will strive increasingly to lift themselves up to the divine expectation. That goes without saying. It ought also to go without saying that God will accommodate himself to the speed of men. He will not forget his obligation to adjust his stride to man's stride. When, however, these mutual adjustments have been made it is to be expected that God and men together will find their thought and their strength absorbed in the task which confronts them together. In our remaining pages we shall consider the Christlike God as the Friend of men. The friendship which amounts

to most is the friendship born of a labor in a common task. Friendship which comes out of direct gaze of men toward one another is not so deep or so worthy as that which spontaneously arises through working together in a noble duty.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DIVINE FRIEND

We come, then, finally to God as the Friend of men, the highest conception to which we can attain. All other relationships, including that of sons working together with a Father, fall short of the best if they do not reach a climax in friendship. We pass to consider the attainment of that knowledge of God which crowns itself in friendship.

Our knowledge of God bases itself on doing the will of God. Friendship apart, and the requirements of justice alone considered, this doing of the will is the only fair condition for entrance into a kingdom of God composed of men as we know them. For a man's will is the one instrument of his spiritual equipment normally under his own control. If the kingdom of God were only for the acute intellects, able to master intellectual mysteries, many worthy people would have to remain outside. They would not have the requisite understanding. If the doors were to open only to those capable of fine seizures of beauty, or talented with the religious genius of the mystic, only a few could enter. When, however, the

condition is only that a man shall set his will toward the will of God, that makes possible a kingdom of multitudes of men who do not indeed do the same things, or actually follow the same courses, but who walk in the same spirit. On such basis men reveal themselves, not as all in the same place, but as all facing in the same direction. The child and the mature man, the learned and the unlearned, the gifted and the commonplace, all have enough power over themselves to look toward the will of God, and to seek to catch his spirit.

Someone protests, however, that there is no use trying to do the will of God without knowing about him, and that it is deep-seated religious beliefs which give value to the doing in accordance with the divine will. How can a man be a friend of God without right ideas about God? This seems quite conclusive when urged by a believer with a passion of creedal orthodoxy.

Correctness of theological dogma as a sign of friendship with God must, of course, be considered. Is it possible, with the character of God as revealed in Christ before us, to say that friendship with the divine means formal rightness of theological conceptions? Many of us had predicted that such a question as

this would not be raised again in our generation, but much current religious debate shows that our conclusion was premature. If we keep our theology close to life, we may well ask ourselves what basis for friendship there is in identity or similarity of authorized doctrines. This is not to minimize the importance of the formal creeds. Friendship deepens with deepening knowledge, but to make friendship depend too much on knowledge would be to empty religious experience of much of its content. Surely the intimacies of family life do not depend primarily upon such knowledge. The son's knowledge of his father can no doubt grow gloriously through the years, but it would be astonishingly farfetched to say that any formal correctness of information is the basis of communion between a father and his son. The like-mindedness which is worth everything to the family feeling is a like-mindedness in fundamental aims. Doing the will of God is voluntary and free surrender to the highest spiritual ideals within one's reach. The better theories we have about God the better we shall carry out the purpose of God, but, surely, we can have full devotion to the divine will without being formally correct in our thought of God, judged by the authorized theological standards. Suppose a lover of men so con-

secrated that he is willing, if need be, to die for men. This is the very stuff of which the Kingdom is made; this is the kind of soul in whom God delights; and yet the devotion may or may not be toward an established orthodoxy.

Considerations like this, however, are not final. We cannot dispense with earnest and sincere thinking in religious experience.

A distinguished philosopher of the last generation declared that reasoning in abstract conceptions is a veritable experiencing of the Deity. Not all truth is on the same plane, and there must needs be honest search for a basis of selection among truths. I know that this arouses the ire of a certain type of truth-seekers who will have it that truth is truth, and that all truth-seeking is on the same level. Yet there must be some standard. Some truths are productive and some trifling. A botanist might put in his time counting the separate trees of a forest, but he would hardly win much honor as a truth-seeker by so doing. By one means or another all thinkers try to make their utterances or their discoveries seem the most worth while. They make distinctions between mere catalogues of facts and vital principles, and between judgments of existence and judgments of value.

Now, when all is said and done we weigh

truths by their value for human minds. I do not by this accept an uncritical pragmatism as a path to divine knowledge. John Dewey has done well to remind us that the foremost founder of pragmatism in this country, William James, never intended to set up what the world calls success as the standard of judgment for truth, but pragmatism has too often lent itself to a low scale of values as a test of truth. The modern emphasis on so-called efficiency in much religious effort may be well and good as increasing congregations and collections, but it surely cannot be an avenue of approach to intimacy with a Christ-like God. The aim of Christian knowledge must be moral as making for the highest and best in human life, even when no immediate practical results are visible. The contemplation of astronomical truth, or the higher mathematics, may not have the slightest utilitarian consequence, and yet may possess the noblest value for the rare delight such contemplation brings on its own account to human minds. Without trying to elaborate the ideal in detail, we are all fast coming to agree that Christianity is for the enlargement and refinement of human life. The more rich and full the humanity of men, the more irresistible is our belief in the efficacious presence

of the divine. The more genuinely human a man is, the more surely has he grasped the divine.

There must, then, be high moral and spiritual quality in the pursuit of knowledge which leads to friendship with the Divine. There must be a venture of faith in such learning, a positive pursuit of the deliberately chosen best. When I say "best" I do not mean the truth that is easiest or pleasantest. Anyone who has had experience with an educational elective system is familiar with the youth who treats such a system as a quick road to easy courses, and he knows the sad consequences which await such a youth. He is also familiar with that other type of student who sees in an elective system a chance to get at the courses which will do most for a student, courses, some of which challenge as a call to mountain climbing. So with the choice of the ideals toward which the truth-seeker turns his effort.

There cannot be any short summary of what knowledge will count most for the largest and finest human life. So that one thinker impatiently tells us that we would better be content just to seek truth. That aim seems plain enough. Let us free ourselves from all presuppositions whatever, and try to find the

truth-in-itself regardless of where it may lead us. An instant's reflection, however, ought to show us that this is not at all how the search for truth proceeds. The most matter-of-fact scientist carries into his laboratory complex interlaced assumptions which are quite as much determinative of what he will see as is his microscope. Conceptions of natural law, hypotheses of various orders of plausibility, the spirit which we call the scientific temper—all these and swarms of other presuppositions too numerous to mention, help or hinder the study of the scientist. Very often the most effective force in leading to a discovery is the unshakeable conviction that what the seeker seeks must be there. This conviction does not put the fact there, but it mightily aids in discovery, sometimes to the oversight of other facts which might seriously modify the significance of the one discovered. We are always hearing about the exceeding morality of the scientific temper, its modesty and humility, its patience in work and waiting. All of this is splendidly just. One of the world's best spiritual gains of the last three hundred years has been the scientific temper. Still, there is this one point at which the scientific temper falls short. The scientist is not often enough willing to scrutinize his own

assumptions. He cannot escape assumptions no matter how closely he watches against them, but once aware of the assumptions he should become even more modest, and more charitable toward workers whose assumptions are more openly expressed. If the scientist is told that he is studying with a utilitarian aim, he may justifiably resent the charge. If, however, he begins to suspect that the object of his search has and can have no significance—if it is inconsequential, or trifling—he will turn to something else. Which implies that some standard is determining the value of his studies. Value means value to somebody, value to the seeker himself, value to other scientists, value to that universe which, according to the scientist himself, is an expression of law throughout.

In the search for the Divine Source of Truth, and for friendship with God on the basis of truth, the thinker is admittedly in danger of assuming the worth for human and divine ideals of what fits in most tightly to his accustomed notions, and thus of missing the appeal of truth for truth's own sake. One of the foremost theologians of the past generation justified the attitude of the Roman Church toward Galileo on the ground that the ecclesiastical authorities had to consider, not

science in itself, but the effects of scientific announcement on the millions of worshipers whose faith might be shattered by such announcement. We do not have to go back to the time of Galileo for other instances of such ecclesiastical solicitude. Because of the organized resistance to newer discoveries and theories the skeptic, the critic, even the scoffer, have their divinely appointed functions in the progress of the divine revelation. Still, this does not make less the importance of the thinking that seeks to put the best possible construction on the universe.

The especially Christian reasoning is based upon the will-to-believe and upon the practical life which comes out of the will-to-believe. There is to-day considerable emphasis on the will-not-to-believe, and, it must be admitted, considerable justification for such emphasis. Some features of religion must be met with a will-not-to-believe. The priests of Baal in Old Testament times no doubt were altogether anxious to encourage the will-to-believe, and the prophets attacked them with the will-not-to-believe. We touch here a region of inner motive where we cannot pass judgment, so far as any individual is concerned. We can say, however, that in treating of friendship with a Christlike God the ideal must be a

Christlike fullness and fineness of life. A man may doubt everything in order to learn something. His sincere intent may be the advancement of the frontiers of the kingdom of truth. It has often happened in the course of philosophic history that those who have discovered the blindness of blind alleys have served as truly as the men who have found the road through. The exploration of the world in the old days of search for passages to the Far East was at times immensely furthered by the sailors who pushed into bays and inlets and rivers only to find the passage closed. It is occasionally quite as important to find where a road is not as to find where it is. Now, if we are dealing with those who doubt with this constructive aim, if we have before us those who show a will-not-to-believe for the sake of finding something worthy of the will-to-believe, we have a different problem from that of the doubter whose chronic mood is cynical rejoicing at the frailty and failure of the human spirit. Just what pleasure such cynicism would find in a companionship with that divine which centers all upon the good we cannot pretend to say.

At the present hour also there are those who preach that the communion of the soul with the divine is best sought in æsthetic delight.

Storied windows richly dight, music reverberating through long-drawn aisles, the cathedral or temple standing forth in architectural glory —all this ministers to the religious instinct with an unspeakable efficacy that I, for one, shall not attempt to gainsay. How anyone, however, with the grasp on the ethical nature of God which comes out of the idea of Jesus, can put this æstheticism before the devotion to moral purpose is beyond us. With Jesus the ethical in God stands first. After that all the resources of art may well be employed to set on high and to adorn the doctrine of God.

This is not the opportunity for a lecture, certainly not for a sermon, on the moral basis of art, but it may be just as well to remark that the periods which have taken most seriously the Christ-revelation of God have been those which, on the whole, have soared to grandest heights of artistic achievement, this too without any direct teaching of a dependence of art on Christianity. The explanation seems to be that, with Christianity doing its utmost to enlarge and refine human life, the artistic faculties have shared in the uplift. We have mentioned the Middle Ages in a reference to the former control of the church over trade and industry. We do well

to remember that in mediæval centuries Christianity wrought powerfully upon art as well as upon industry. I do not mean that the church purposely or deliberately controlled artistic expression, but that Christianity looked upon human life as a whole, and that this wholeness of view made for a soundness of mental and moral health which revealed itself in such artistic qualities as symmetry of design, proper subordination of parts to whole, and perspective. The Gothic cathedral is the consummate climax of an age that saw life steadily and saw it whole. Whatever else we may say about a Gothic cathedral, we cannot hold that it savors of the aberrant or the abnormal. If the builders of a cathedral felt any tendency to freakishness they vented the impulse on the gargoyles, or they stuck an impish figure in here and there as a detail which those on the lookout for such imps might find if they could. With the working out of the implications of the Reformation more and more provinces of human activity were taken over into what has been called the secular sphere, and the direct influence of religion has been more and more narrowed down. Behold what a result! Instead of treating the massive moral activities of life as themes for interpretation, the artistic impulse to-day works itself

out only too often into the portrayal of the diseased and crazy. Progress no doubt comes to human society with the study of the pathological, provided such study aims at the discovery of the secrets of health. Not much advance would result from rummaging around in hospitals and madhouses just to gloat over sickness and lunacy. Our artistic plight is somewhat as if the Gothic builders had put their main effort, not on solving the mechanical principles by which the weight of the roof could be shifted off the walls and carried to buttressed pillars by the diagonal ribs, not on correctly proportioning floor-space and height, not on impressing stone with intellectual and spiritual suggestiveness, but on the imps—with this immense difference, that the imps of the Gothic cathedral could not have been other than signs of a likeable roguishness. They would not have been expressions of the morbid cynicism that abounds in art to-day. Art for art's sake depends on our definition of art. Art should be art for life's sake.

Artistic considerations, indeed, lie off to one side of my main purpose, but nevertheless the reference to art is pertinent because of the current emphasis on sincerity as the key to all knowledge worth having; and it seems that any eccentric artist can to-day win praise for

sincerity. It is not the duty of any human judge to declare whose sincerity stands justified in the eyes of the Source of all truth, artistic or other; but if we are looking for paths to the Center of all truth, we may as well make the most of that all-around wholeness of life which reveals itself in wholesomeness of temper and deed. The so-called "temperamental" is not a key to the divine, in spite of the claims of a type of nervous mysticism. The higher the mind arises in the scale of development the less temperamental it becomes. One reason why we have such difficulty in finding interesting personal records of an artist like Shakespeare may be due to the absence in him of those temperamental peculiarities which lay the foundation for good stories, authentic or legendary, about a famous character. I do not suppose, either, that there is a widespread tendency to contest the standing of Leonardo da Vinci as an artistic genius, but not much in the records of Da Vinci's career suggests the temperamental. Study of all available principles of mechanics, and of all varieties of living organisms, attaining to insights far ahead of the science of the time, does not betoken emotional flightiness or unsteadiness. So far has the common expectation as to the eccentricity of the æsthetic

temperament reached to-day, however, that we no longer count on the ordinary codes of ethics, which guide the conduct of the plain man, as to be observed by the pronouncedly artistic souls. As for all this talk about sincerity, let us reflect that sincerity depends for its moral worth upon the underlying conception as to what in life is worth while, or upon the general ideals of life. It is possible for a drunkard to be altogether sincere in his devotion to his cups.

Does not this suspicion of the value of emotionalism, however, pertinent though it may be in this immediate context, open the door to dangerous skepticism about those states of religious feeling which have in all the history of the church been looked upon as a special avenue to the understanding of the Divine, and a high token of favor of the Divine? Conversion, of which Christianity makes so much, mysticism, uplift in prayer, all have resounding emotional accompaniments. If we strike sharply at the emotional stresses of the artistically temperamental constitution, what is to hinder like summary blows against the religiously temperamental constitution? Have we not again and again heard that some persons have gifts that amount to religious genius, and that in the progress of reli-

gion, as in all other phases of progress, the genius plays an invaluable rôle?

Let us remind ourselves, as we heed this question, that Christianity did not invent or discover conversion, or mysticism, or prayer. All these experiences were common to practically all religions at the time Christ was born, and had been common to them for centuries. What Jesus did was to introduce into them the idea of an ethical God whose requirements had to do with righteousness.

In evangelical circles weight has always been laid upon conversion as the essential in approach to the divine favor. It was almost inevitable that in such emphasis the emotional upheaval of the experience itself would get into the position of first importance. In Christianity's stress upon a moral God, conversion takes its start in sorrow over sin, and issues in a determination to lead a new life following the commandments of God. The moral state which results from conversion is the all-essential.

A friend for whose power to describe his own mental states I have respect has told me that he experienced two definite conversions in his religious career. One was a conversion out of conventional, traditional acceptance of customary religious practices into materialism.

The second was a conversion from the materialism to vital belief in Christ. Emotionally speaking, the first conversion was even more sharply defined than the second. It was in a biological laboratory that my friend, then a college student, was watching through a microscope the changes actually taking place in the tissues of a living organism. Suddenly a seemingly irresistible conviction seized him that these processes were all-sufficient in themselves, that there was no effective spiritual reality in the universe. This experience seemed just as vividly self-evident as did the later crisis which brought this youth back to belief in God. During the time that the spell persisted it witnessed to him of atheism.

Now, incidents like this may not happen often, but they do occur often enough to put us on our guard against taking a conversional crisis as evidence of its own worth. Every student of religious revivals knows that the converts in evangelistic campaigns have to be guided carefully if their conversion results in that changed moral attitude and conduct which fits in with the life which we call Christ-like.

So likewise with the experiences of mysticism. Just now there is renewed emphasis on the mystical as preeminently an indication of

the actual presence of the divine. The mystics are hailed as the friends of God. Any careful student of mysticism will at once admit that some of what passes for mysticism is not predominantly spiritual. The closeness of dependence of spirit on matter, or of mind on nervous organization, the susceptibility of the physical organism to the general conditions in which it is placed, the responsiveness of the imagination to all varieties of stimulus, the oversuggestibility of some types of mind—all such factors and many, many others the well-informed of mysticism will readily recognize and discount. Nevertheless, considerable numbers of trained students speak of mysticism as of value apart from whether it is Christlike or not. I have heard mysticism used as a basis for putting Mohammed, Buddha, and Jesus on about the same level, as all alike having discovered the true road to intimacy with God. Distinguished Christian teachers have given us to understand that the mystic experience stands in its own right; and occasionally they tell us that in such experience the soul is lifted beyond all our moral considerations. "Beyond good and evil" is the phrase sometimes used in this connection.

It must be understood at the outset that there ought not to be any objection to trying

out all promising paths to an experience of the divine. I have no protest to file against making the utmost of abnormal states of consciousness to discover what human faculties promise most for susceptibilities to the divine. It may be that there is a psychological technique to be followed in fixing the attention on the spiritual values, and that fastings and vigils do have something of the efficacy that Middle Ages saints seemed to find in them. Especially might an age given to self-indulgence seek by stern self-denial to find a door to the temple of the Spirit.

Nevertheless, mysticism to be Christian must be fitted into a system at the center of which stands the Christlike God. If the followers of such a God have visions, they ought to see something worth seeing. The more closely we study those prophets of the Old Testament on whose work Jesus built, the less dogmatic we become as to the nature of the prophetic illumination in its psychological aspects. There is no reason to declare that the visions of the prophets were only pictorial symbolism used by them to illustrate spiritual truths. The visions were, as far as we can understand the records, actual supernormal crises to which the routine of ordinary everyday life would not give the key. Yet the visions meant

something. The emotional stir lent reenforcement to the definite moral purposes and ideals. One of the noticeable features of Old Testament history is the stress laid upon the necessity of moral content in any experience that claimed to bring a message from the Lord of Israel. Israel's vision of the glory of the Lord which like smoke filled the Temple, Amos' basket of summer fruit, even the stupendous dramas which rose before the gaze of Ezekiel, all had a moral meaning. They issued in messages of a righteousness to be worked into conduct in market places and temple courts and council chambers.

Let now some student of non-Christian religion discourse to us of visions and trances of Hindu saints and we forthwith grant the validity of the experiences as testifying to deep and genuine religious instinct. We do not doubt or disparage. When, however, the student proceeds to inform us that the Hindu mystic belongs in the same grade of religious importance and significance as the Christian mystic we demur. I once heard an expert in Oriental religion dilating on the worth of some Hindu utterances of mystic ecstasy which were calculated to convey a fresh sense of the awful majesty of the physical universe, of the immensity of the void. If a sense of the awful-

ness of spatial distances were religiously important, a gaze at the stars, or a perusal of a treatise on astronomy ought to be much more effective. In this glad day of desire for better understanding among the followers of all varieties of religions one voices a criticism of a non-Christian belief at one's peril. It is at considerable risk, then, that I ask as to the value of Hindu mysticism. I urge the question with all proper hesitancy, because I think I am aware of the danger of judging Hindu mysticism by superficial appearances. Still, what does the mysticism amount to, in terms of the enlargement and betterment of human life? To stare at the sun, or at one's own navel, till all rational thought sinks toward unconsciousness—what does it amount to? We waive the significance of the ashes and the dirt in which the seer sits, also the stunted and dwarfed muscles that reveal long humiliations of the flesh. What ideas, or ideals, come out of all this? To raise the question at all is to the Hindu a complete missing of the point. He replies to us that the absence of ideas and ideals, and of all specifically intellectual content, is itself the justification of the experience. Mysticism, in its very sinking toward the void, gives a hint of the process by which the soul which has let go of earth

falls into the bosom of the infinite, the infinite being characterized as plenitude, but practically treated as emptiness.

Again, what of it? Well, indifference to human misery, inability to better the human lot, callousness to all appeals to pursue the humanly good and beautiful—these are what of it. He would, indeed, be hasty who would deny that Western life would gain something from the reposefulness of the Hindu, for much Western life is forced and distorted. Any relaxation would to some souls be relief, but I doubt if Hindu or other non-Christian mysticism can be rated anywhere near Christian mysticism as tending to the welfare of human life. Let us not forget that Christianity judges everything by the outcome for larger and better humanity, that humanity being of distinctive worth on its own account and not for absorption into anything else.

There has been some stir of discussion in recent years as to whether Paul and Jesus were not mystics after the order of the nervously unstable. Whereas the type of student I first mentioned classifies Christian mysticism with non-Christian mysticism, with all forms alike noble, another school puts Christian mysticism on the same level with all other mysticisms as all alike symptoms of disordered or unhealthy

nerves. So there has been debate about the mental health of Paul and Jesus.

The discussion has gone on, for the most part, on a professedly psychological line without any historical sense whatever. Paul saw a vision on the road to Damascus; and to some specialists the symptoms suggest sunstroke, or epilepsy. Paul heard a voice, thus betraying that he was subject to the "auditions" of the nervously overwrought. All the experts ignore the feature of the Damascus experience which Paul himself said was of prime consequence, namely, the command to break with his old life outright, and to preach the gospel of Jesus to the Gentiles. Considering the immeasurable benefits for the race flowing from the Damascus crisis, we have to remark, paraphrasing Bowne, that, if the experience was sunstroke or epilepsy, we have before us the most remarkable instance of utilizing a personal affliction for the good of humanity in all history. Epilepsy which leaves its victim better and greater after the fits than before differs from epilepsy as we know it. A peculiarity of Christian mysticism seems to be that the faculties of the mystic are exalted into an intensity of activity which preserves the identity of the person but which gives his faculties wider range and keener acuteness. It may be fine to sink out of a troubled world

toward a void, but it is better to rise above that world to intellectual and spiritual mastery. The Christian mystic sees sharply and reports clearly. What he sees is worth seeing and worth telling. His visions bear directly upon moral attitude and moral conduct.

In the narratives concerning Jesus it is not easy for the biblical critic to get hold of material suggestive of nervous disturbance. A favorite device is to avow that experiences like the Temptation are self-evidently mystic visions. Let it be granted. Is there anything indicative of mental disorder in a crisis that seizes upon all the essentials of a true method for the spiritual redemption of Israel, and compresses them in immortal utterance within the compass of a few score words? Or is it declared that the mind of Jesus was colored by the apocalyptic of his time? Critics are by no means agreed upon the extent of this coloring, but let it be granted to the specialist to make the most of his case against Jesus. Apocalyptic is obviously a form of thinking foreign to our day, but there is nothing necessarily crazy or mentally unbalanced about it. If we wished an outstanding illustration of the power of Jesus to deal with popular systems from the point of view of the ethical, we might find such illustration in the vigor

with which he insisted upon ethical principles as binding for that kingdom of God toward which Jewish apocalyptic looked.

The critics are never weary of reminding us how little we know of the historical Jesus. What little we do know, however, is consistent with itself, in the essentials of the portraiture. Every great character shows a tendency to marshal around it elements like itself, and thus it happens that a historic movement takes distinctiveness from its central leader, a distinctiveness often resulting in one-sidedness. Christianity has revealed through the ages a tendency toward balancing part against part so that the total movement grows more and more steadily centered. Making all possible allowance for the fragment of soundness in the claim that a mistake thoroughly believed in is as potent as a truth, we must be excused for exercising our will-to-believe that the experiences of Jesus which helped lay the well-balanced foundations of Christianity were above the normal, rather than off the normal or below the normal. We shall not, merely because of some expert's guess, believe that a balanced system came from an unbalanced founder.

Christian mysticism at its best appears to be that keen awareness of divine realities

which comes out of persistent doing of the divine will—it is the awareness of the practiced soul. Just as training of any faculty brings at last to that faculty a directness of perception and of execution which seems altogether mysterious to an uninstructed onlooker, so constant exercise of the whole life in righteousness brings an awareness of spiritual values, keener than eyesight, swifter than formal reasoning, and more instantaneous than deliberate resolution. Obedience leads to spiritual adjustment, and out of the adjustment arise those moral insights which are the best of Christianity.

We are not quite through with mysticism however. The mystics have perhaps too often and too readily assumed that what they call the direct gaze upon God, or direct communion with God, is the essential. If mysticism is communion in friendship, we may well ask whether communion is at its noblest in such direct gaze. Does not friendship, as we know it, come to its finest as each party to the friendship loses himself in a cause to which both are devoted? Which is better, to look directly at God, or at the objects to which God is devoted? If we could but learn the object of the divine thought, the sure road to friendship would necessarily be the contem-

plation of that object. Now, the Christ-revelation leaves us in no doubt as to the object of divine contemplation and effort, namely, a race of men, an organized humanity, redeemed into likeness to Christ. If by some ineffable transport of emotion we could be swept up into a vision of all things in God, the surest testimony that we had actually been with God would be that we had not only seen God more clearly, but had seen the object of his thought and love more clearly. In the friendships which mean most, each party to the friendship finds the other most completely in losing himself in the purposes to which that other is giving himself. So that there is a world of significance for friendship with the Divine in the organic bond which links together in Jesus' word the second commandment with the first as "like unto the first." In service for men we attain to the vision of God. We see God by looking in the direction in which God fixes his gaze. We meet him at the far end of his sweep of vision.

It is from the importance of what God views for our view of God that we must build our doctrine of prayer, if we are to accept God as Christlike. Worshipers frequently declare that the most difficult aspect of the prayer life is intercession, and yet that aspect fits

in most harmoniously to any interpretation of the Divine as like unto Christ. Using a somewhat geometrical figure of speech, the expositors of prayer tell us that the closer we come to God the closer we come to one another, and the converse is usually valid. The more earnest the prayer on behalf of others the firmer the seizure of divine values. The more social the prayer the more personal its effects for the praying soul, for the men prayed for, and for God.

The prayer that we find hardest to comprehend, namely, the intercessory, Jesus took most easily and naturally for granted. If God is a Father and Friend like unto Christ, the whole conception of prayer suggests the atmosphere of a family, in which the common aim is to deepen the spiritual intimacies of the entire group. Intercession as a means of our getting God to do something for men on our account which he would not do on his own account, simply fades out in the presence of Jesus. Intercession as the strengthening in prayer of that family spirit, of that sympathy which should rule in a family group, may well be among the most potent dynamics in the universe. Here, again, let us remember that the means on which a Christlike God relies are spiritual. Such a God does not

transform men by making metaphysical changes in the substance of their souls. He could no doubt wipe out the freedom of men, but that would not be worthy of God. It may be that praying souls themselves loosen influences which the Divine Friend can use on the souls of those prayed for. It has been objected by at least one writer on the attributes of God, that the generation of this social power through intercessory prayer would of itself overpower the freedom of men. This is a strange conclusion—to maintain that when my sympathy for a fellow man becomes so intense that it prompts prayer for that fellow man, or that when my interest in another's welfare prompts prayer for that welfare, the man prayed for is so helped that he loses his freedom! To affirm that the Father of the human family cannot send some blessings upon individuals in the family until what we might call the family spirit is roused in behalf of those blessings, is simply to say that social law acts here as elsewhere, but the blessings of the revelation of a kindly friendliness in which God and men join hardly overpower free will. Blessings must be freely accepted to be of spiritual avail. No, intercession to a Christlike God does not call for any overpowering of human freedom. It provides for the release of that

freedom in a social atmosphere in which the Father and the sons together show forth good will, till that good will becomes appealing and convincing to the slow or stubborn. Once men have freely come within the circle of the divine friendship, the powers released upon them may indeed seem overwhelming, but even here the forces are freely yielded to. It is as if we surrendered ourselves to a trade wind, or a gulf stream, or to the aroused public opinion of a vast host.

Throughout my entire discussion it may be that some readers have missed what has seemed to them the one thing needful in all sound discussion of the friendship of man with God—namely, that solitariness of soul with which each of us must think of himself as standing before God. Concede all we please to the social in religion—its power in shaping the individual into distinctiveness, its worth as a field of service of God—yet when we concede all this we still have the individual, worth what he is on his own account as a son of God. We have agreed that it is the function of all social organization and organisms to bring out the distinctiveness of the individual. Must we not by our own argument come at the end to the admission and avowal that the Christian himself, alone before God, is the end

before all others worthy? Must not this individual good man seek some virtues wholly on their own account? To take the old reference to the good, the true, and the beautiful, must not these in their Christian aspects be sought on their own account? Must not they fill the whole field of the gazer's view?

The truth in this I am as eager as anyone to exalt. The individual good man is the end of all worthy moral effort. Does a man become good, however, by taking his own perfection as the object of his own striving? The critic replies that he does not mean this, but, rather, that a man becomes good by gazing as directly as he can upon God, that he develops toward the morally good, true, and beautiful by directing himself toward these objects themselves. The questioner becomes a little impatient when we rejoin that the lover of the good, the true, and the beautiful attains a firmer grasp on all these excellences when he tries to share them with others. This appears like a quibble, but quibble or not, our possession of some goods increases in sureness of grasp with every effort to let others share them. There is a giving that does not impoverish. I may fancy that I have by myself thoroughly mastered an idea, but I find that my understanding of the idea increases

with my attempts to explain it to another. So true is this that some pedagogues tell us that we do not ourselves understand an idea till we can communicate it. As to the life lived in solitude before God, let us not forget that at the instants when we feel most distinctive and peculiar we are probably most like other people, that we should understand ourselves better if we understood other people better, that we could serve other people better if we let them into our understanding of the deeper phases of experience that seem to us most personal. This last consideration, by the way, accounts for our interest in the diaries of others and intimate records of the personal experience of others than ourselves.

This, however, does not seem to the objector to dig deep enough. The social effect of inner experience seems to him incidental. All that is left for us to say is that the contemplation of God as God without regard to the objects of God's thought does seem most strange! I do not see how we can escape the idea of men as members of a family if we are to accept Christ's teaching about God. All utterance about the deepening of the personal life by communion with God alone is worth while, but in the light of the Christ-teaching, even such experiences are best when they are

shared. Those who remind us of the worth of the men who contemplate the higher values on account of those values themselves end by suggesting to us that a good life in itself, that is, a life that contemplates such values, is among the richest of society's assets. With this we all agree, but this brings back the social reference. The soundest advice we can give to some men is to tell them to lose themselves in their work, but in this advice we have in mind the welfare of other men also. No doubt some moral exhortation which tells us to think of all men in our work is distracting. We would better think of the work itself. Thinking of the work, however, is vastly different from thinking of oneself. Once a fundamental aim of service is adopted, the worker need not necessarily be always trying to visualize human beings and their needs. It is more important for his social service to press attention on the task itself. This is quite other, however, than the search for the delight of an approach to a value with oneself in mind.

It is time to draw this essay to a close. Much of what I have written may seem dogmatic and overconfident. May I add, then, in closing, that I have not desired to exhibit dogmatism and overconfidence as proper tem-

pers in which to approach the Divine. If this approach is in that spirit of friendship which, I think, is all-important, we may discern that a reverence which is not anxious to profess much about intimacy with God is, deep-down, a requisite for close sympathy with the Divine Mind. God's love for men is based on respect for men. On the basis of the mutual respect of God and men the finest friendship can be built up. The ministry of silence may mean not only that God speaks to us in the silences, but that he speaks to us about matters concerning which we keep silent, allowing the revelation which comes from God's speech to work its way out into life.

I have used such strong terms as those in which I have spoken of God as being under bonds, of his being obligated, and the like, in a fashion likely to suggest a sterner Deity than the Father of Christ. This has been simply for the sake of calling attention to the moral aspects. What right calls for, God gladly does. We should not care to follow a God who held fast to righteousness through cold duty. Neither should we care for a God who loved us without a zest for righteousness. In the Christlike God righteousness is so truly love, and love so truly righteousness, that the two, down in the depths, are one and the same.

It has not seemed necessary in this essay to discuss the "idea of the holy" as the basis from which all religious experience is by some alleged to take its start, the holy being conceived of as the "numinous," or that which causes awe, or dread. The sturdiest advocates of the "numinous" admit that it must be rationalized and moralized. I may be permitted merely to remark that in genuine Christianity the feeling of awe before the vaguely "numinous" must be transformed into respect and reverence for the divine attributes which are revealed to us from one angle as righteousness, and from another angle as love, and which are merged together inseparably in the Christ.

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